

SPORTS AWARD  
OF THE  
YEAR '97

# UCT MOUNTAIN AND SKI

## JOURNAL 97



# **Campus Camera**

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### **Bannocht..... Blessing**

On the day when the weight deadens on your shoulders and you stumble,  
May the clay dance to balance you.  
And when your eyes freeze behind a grey window and the ghost of lost gets into you.  
May a flock of colours, indigo, red, green and azure blue, come to awaken in you... a meadow of delight.  
When the canvas frays far from shore and a stain of ocean blackens beneath you.  
May there come across the water a path a yellow moonlight to bring you safely home.  
May the nourishment of earth be yours  
May the clarity of light be yours  
May the fluency of the ocean be yours  
May the protection of the ancestors be yours  
And so may a slow wind work these words of love around you an invisible cloak  
..... to mind you all your days.

John O' Donohue

### **PENELOPE (PENNY) WILSON**

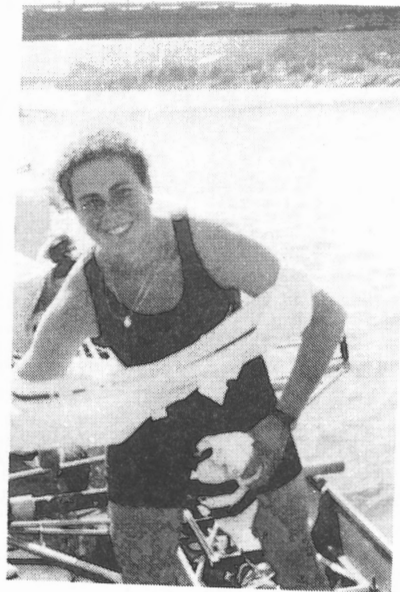
20 • 10 • 1975 - 5 • 12 • 1996



You are never there.  
Even with death, you are not there.  
The goal of "getting there", of completion is not necessary.  
The importance is within the motion and the living.  
View life as a continuing blossoming.  
Life is a voyage, not a destination.

### **TESSA GREY VRIEND**

15 • 1 • 1975 - 24 • 4 • 1997



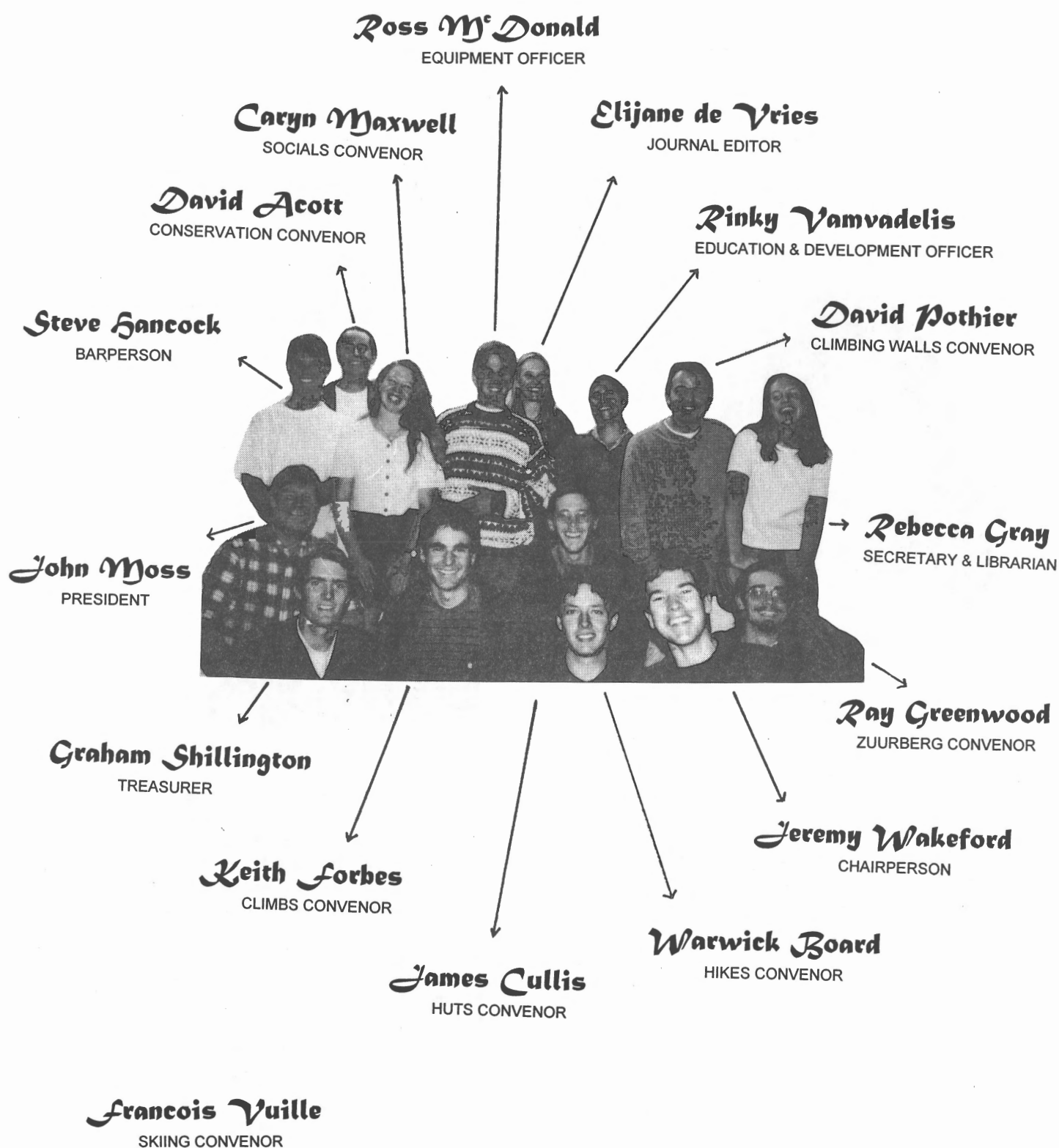
For those of you who had the pleasure  
To meet Tessa Vriend, a gem, a treasure  
With curly locks around her face  
A heart of gold, a friend embrace  
You'll remember her as a sporting queen  
Showing powers and commitment and always keen.

Rowing became a priority in her life  
Finding time for the Club was quite a strife  
Yet she did go on several hikes  
Lions' Head, Freshers' and the likes.  
"I'll climb more mountains" she had written on her wall  
Tess, given the chance you would have climbed them all.

**I would like to dedicate this year's journal to  
all those that have felt the passing of someone dear to them  
As they moved from this world to one yet to be explained.**



# MOUNTAIN AND SKI COMMITTEE '97





# GNOME

I have to write a little story  
But I thought that it might bore thee  
So I thought that I would write a poem  
And call it gnome.

So far so good.  
I got that rhythm and rhyme  
But I best get a moving  
or I will run outta time.

As you may have known  
Even though it may not have shown  
I have been doing the editing  
and MAN what a thing!!

How did those before me do it?  
Sometimes it was quite shit.  
To get everything just right,  
is like asking to see a star in a city's night.

To Olly and the rest to come  
Hope you've got a good chair;  
As you'll be spending much time there  
If not, you're sure to get a numb bum.

To Jeremy and the rest of the team  
I think that we were the top of the cream

Look here, committee '98  
I know you won't be second rate  
With James in the driving seat  
and you'll with your dancing feet  
There is no telling were you all go  
I am sure you will put on a great show

To those out there that did there bit  
Thanks a lot most articles were a hit  
As to those that didn't make it  
Try getting it in on time  
'cos late articles are almost a crime.

And thanks to those that did more  
Rinky who checked the main core  
And Mark Jackson for doing the cover - Take four  
Without there contribution  
This journal could only be read in the ablution.

If you are thinking of joining the club  
Well then hello and a rubber-dub-dub  
Just read this journal and see what we do  
Decisions like this should be easy for you!

But one thing I can guarantee,  
The club's a whole lot better than my poetry

And with a skip and a jump  
I'll be on my way  
With that seat on that bird  
to take me far and away.



*ELIJANE DE VRIES.*



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"OK let me dig for something deep. A wise man once said: 'you only realise something 's true value after its gone' and that is how I feel every day I spend away from the mountains". *Stuart Finn*

"This ascent saw an NB physiological question raised – what are those little bumps around a woman's nipple?"  
(Braille for 'suck here' !!!) *Rosoco*

"Thought for the day : preserve nature – pickle Rastus" *James Cullis*

"It is written on the arched sky, it looks out from every star, it is on the sailing cloud and in the invisible wind, it is among the hills and the valleys of the earth.... it is the poetry of nature - John Pushkin." *Rod Finn*

"The kitchen feeds us, it nourishes us, and it blackens us (me). As we satisfy our most primitive needs: we take simultaneously, obligatory, the Spirit and it transforms us, reprogramming us. The bottom line maybe there should be a pot-cleaner portfolio!"  
*Carel Haumann, after a messy, alcohol assisted washing up duty*



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# CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT 1996 - 1997

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The past year has been one of unprecedented activity for the Mountain and Ski Club. The principal aim of expanding and intensifying the high standard of service recorded in previous years has been fulfilled by a dedicated and enthusiastic committee. No single aspect of the Club has experienced a decline, while many facets have improved dramatically.

## OBJECTIVES

Taking over a club with an impressive record, I was determined to lead the committee in pursuit of a number of goals:

- (1) to increase membership to over 600
- (2) to raise the rate of participation
- (3) to expand the club's activities
- (4) to enhance services
- (5) to integrate hikers and climbers
- (6) to end the Zuurberg access saga
- (7) to reconstruct Pells Hut
- (8) and to resurrect the development programme.

The following paragraphs tell the story of how we fared...

### • MEMBERSHIP

The year's first goal was to boost our already large membership. We now have at least 633 members (an increase of 83 or 15 percent from 1996), which makes us by far the largest active club on campus. This success is largely due to an extremely effective advertising campaign during orientation week.

### • PARTICIPATION

The second objective was to increase participation, because we do not simply want names on our books. The high quality and range of our services and activities resulted in a massive growth in participation. 933 persons attended hikes and climbs in the first semester, which is an increase of 50% from last year. On average, the attendance at weekly socials has been about 30, while the major parties have in total drawn close to 300 members.

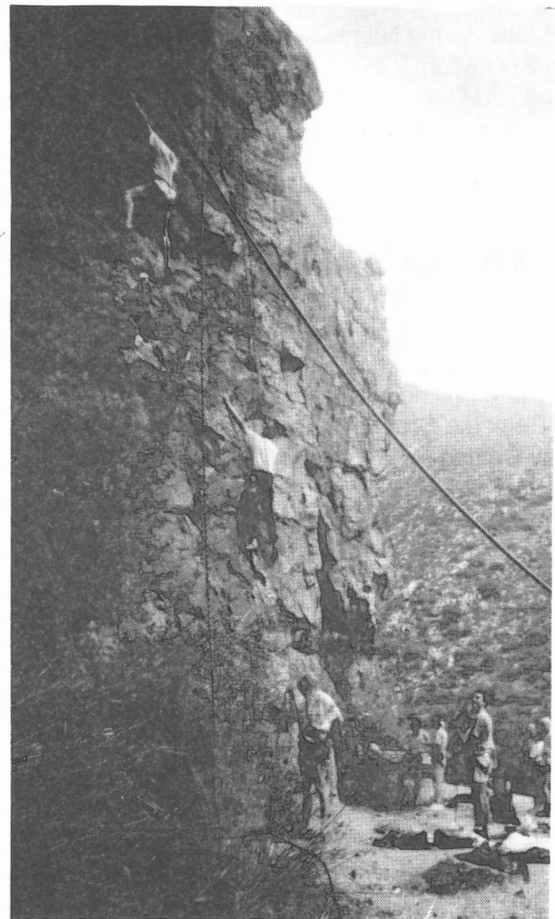
### • ACTIVITIES

#### HIKES

Warwick Board has produced an astounding array of hikes, with two day walks and one overnight hike being organised

virtually every weekend of the academic year. Included amongst these have been two joint hikes with Stellenbosch Berg- en Toerklub. Other activities have included a Car Rally, the annual Devil's Peak Ice-cream Challenge, a caving trip, and an Orienteering Competition, all of which were well attended. Vacation trips have been equally successful, with excursions to the Mountain Zebra National Park, the Drakensberg, the Wild Coast and the Namib-Naukluft Park in Namibia. The club also did three Witels trips during the summer holiday.

#### CLIMBS



CLIMBING AT MONTAGU - LEGO LAND

PHOTO : CARYN MAXWELL

Keith Forbes has done wonders for climbing, principally by focusing the club's attention on beginners. Under the patient and helpful guidance of our experienced leaders, the number of climbers has mushroomed. There were also successful climbing expeditions to the Cederberg and to the Spitzkoppe in Namibia. Furthermore, ten members were sponsored by the club to compete in a National Climbing Competition at the Waterfront.

## SOCIALS

Social events have been of a very high standard this year. Weekly slide shows have been varied and spectacular. The Cheese and Wine party in the first term was a raging success, and the second term's Barn Dance was as popular as ever. In addition, there was a Mountaineering Quiz, a Climbing Video Evening hosted for peninsula climbers, and in the 4th term there will be a photographic competition. The Cocktail Party speaks for itself! Many thanks to the sterling efforts of Caryn Maxwell, and to Mr Reliable Steve Hancock for ensuring no thirst went unquenched.

## SKIING

An uncharacteristically early snowfall in April raised expectations of great falls this winter, but unfortunately they failed to materialise. Waaihoek wore an white cap only once more, during the first week of July. This sad state of affairs has meant that our fully imported Swiss Skiing Convenor has had little to do but sort old skis, drink wine and sing "La Pitchouli". However, we are more ready than ever for ski-able snow after acquiring several pairs of skis and boots, and heli-lifting the portable ski lift to Waaihoek.

## • SERVICES

The club provides several other services to its members. The storeroom suffered its second break-in within a year, and almost all our backpacks were stolen. The remaining equipment, especially the climbing gear, has been well used thanks to Ross M<sup>c</sup>Donald's efficient system.

The library continues to gather dust, although the magazines are very popular. Under the watchful eye of Dave Pothier, beginner climbers have benefited from alterations to the indoor climbing wall, which has seen many a chalked hand this year. Graham Shillington designed a snazzy T-shirt which was printed in time for orientation week.

Communication within the club has been excellent. Termly newsletters have been posted to all members. Thanks to the know-how and creativity of Ianni Vamvadelis, the MSC has an excellent web-page (<http://www.uct.ac.za/depts/src/sports/m&s/index.htm>) which contains an introduction to the club, a committee list, the Constitution and Waaihoek Rules, and the latest newsletter and meets lists. The chairperson has made considerable use of an email distribution list for about 110 members, which keeps them

up to date with the club's activities. Last, but not least, the notice-board in the Students' Union has been alive with the creative flair of leaders and Socials Convenor Caryn.

The MSC has issued two main publications. During orientation week the committee distributed 800 copies of an Introductory Booklet explaining the activities undertaken by the club and the services it provides, and supplying all contact numbers and details of the first term's events. Secondly, the annual MSC Journal was published in February 1997, in time for orientation week. By all accounts this was the best ever edition. Editor Eljane de Vries has been working hard to secure sponsorship and collect articles for the 1997 issue.

Graham Shillington has managed the club's finances extremely well for the past year, which has been a significant contribution to the fluid administration of the club. Future committees will benefit from the accurate minutes taken by secretary Rebecca Gray. Finally, on behalf of the committee I would like to thank John Moss for the experience he has shared with us and the continuity he provides for the committee.

## • INTEGRATION

An unfortunate feature of last year's AGM was a polarisation between climbers and hikers. One of the first items on my agenda was therefore to bridge this gulf. I am very pleased to report that, through the example set by certain committee members and through a general increase in communication and understanding, the situation has been remedied. I hope that the club remains integrated in this respect.

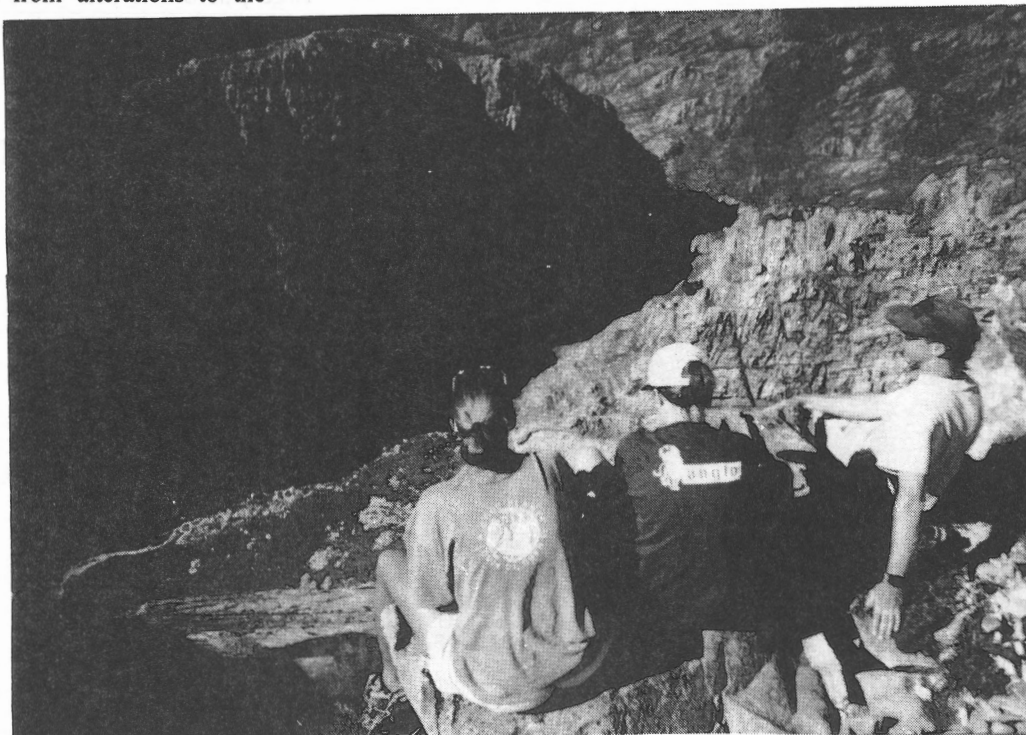


PHOTO : REBECCA GRAY



## • ZUURBERG ACCESS

Over the past few years, access rights to Zuurberg have been a bugbear for the club. My goal this year - as for my predecessors - was to conclude a servitude agreement, or at least take the matter off the hands of the committee. After many fruitless attempts to reach a negotiated settlement, the matter has been referred to UCT's attorneys so that it ceases to be an unnecessary drain on the committee's time and energy. I regard it as unfortunate that the issue has to be taken up in court, and I urge all members to maintain a civil attitude toward all parties.

My thanks go to Ray Greenwood and David Acott for effective management of Zuurberg affairs and energetic pinehacking, respectively.

## • PELL'S HUT

The biggest single challenge to the MSC in the past couple of decades was presented last year when a violent storm ripped off the roof of the 58-year-old Pells hut. An enormous amount of organisation was required to arrange detailed plans for the reconstruction of the roof and the transportation by helicopter of 2.2 tons of building materials to the building site (at about 1650m altitude). The task of resurrecting the hut was carried by 50 hard-working members of the club on 7 weekends between March and May this year. It was indeed a wonderful experience to witness the spirit and enthusiasm of the builders. The efforts way beyond the call of duty exhibited in particular by James Cullis are to be heartily commended.

## • DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

Another pressing priority for the club was the resurrection of the development programme. This year the MSC, with Rinky Vamvadelis at the helm, has re-established a thriving hiking club for students of LEAF college who have not previously had access to mountaineering. The response from LEAF students has been tremendous, and our plan for the future is to train a number of them to be hike leaders, so that the programme will be sustainable and so that they can impart awareness and experience to their communities.

The club's concern for safety has been boosted in the past year by 15 members having completed an Advanced Mountain Leadership Course and 25 members having become certified First Aiders, trained by St. John Ambulance. Furthermore, steps have been taken to develop sport climbing, through coaching clinics for beginners and by bolting easy grade routes at popular climbing venues.

The biggest challenge I see for the coming year is drawing members from the UCT community who have not experienced the joys of mountaineering and/or have not had the opportunities to do so. Part of this necessitates a broadening of the club's appeal, which will depend on an outward-looking attitude of the committee and members.

## THANKS TO THE COMMITTEE

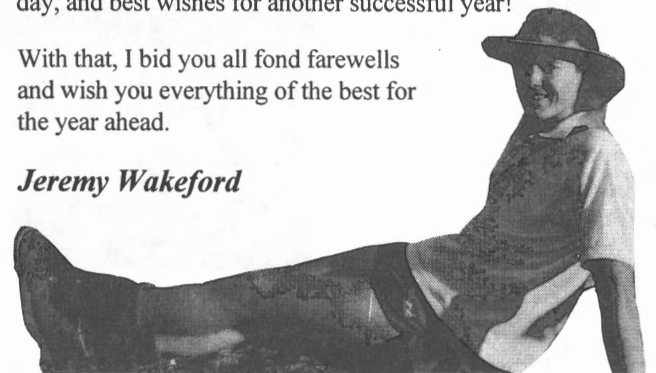
It has been a thoroughly enriching experience to work with the outstanding group of people who made up the 1996/7 committee. They have demonstrated a truly remarkable degree of enthusiasm and dedication to the club and its members, for which I am sure we are all grateful. I believe a large part of the past year's success is attributable to the camaraderie and teamwork of committee. Well done on an excellent job!

## CONGRATULATIONS AND GOOD LUCK TO THE NEW COMMITTEE

I warmly congratulate the newly elected committee. You have entered into a contract which requires - as the name implies - a commitment to the members of the club. I assure you that if you are willing to expend effort, this will be amongst the most rewarding things you will do. Seize the day, and best wishes for another successful year!

With that, I bid you all fond farewells and wish you everything of the best for the year ahead.

*Jeremy Wakeford*



CAPE POINT : SIRKELSVLEI HIKE

PHOTO : RINKY VAMVADELIS

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# ZUURBERG REPORT

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## ACCESS

The access saga has been fairly quite for most of this year. Parking on the property has been secured and will remain for the foreseeable future at the (signboarded) parking lot. The downstream removal of several chunks of bridge has been remedied, but looks likely to become an annual event without a more solid bridge structure in place.

## WITELS

200 people swam and walked and floated their way down the winding mini-chasm of the Witels this past summer season. These numbers are being cut down for the next few seasons, in order to give the valley a chance to completely clear all signs of human involvement. The season went off very well. The only problem that remains to be dealt with for the Witels is one of too many trespassers. A number of policing parties have been planned for the 1997/1998 vacation and should help reduce this abuse.

## ZUURBERG

The property is, well.....still there,.....all of it,...funny thing that. Anyway. The number of permits granted to non-members (250) is testament to the appreciation of this land by groups outside of UCT. I hope that further interaction between UCT-MSG and other Mountain clubs will be encouraged. The snow season was umm....disappointing and by the same token, rain was sparse. The result of this was not only a frustrated Ski Convenor but also a severe shortage of water at the hut. All groups heading up to the hut are reminded to check with the Hut Convenor what water levels are like at the hut, before walking into a desert type of scenario.

## HUTS

Kudos to current chairman Cullis for superhuman efforts for the RDP (Rebuilding Da Pells ) program in the Hex. The hut is now ready for full service and prepared for next winter. Hoare Hut has had its' few leaks sealed and remains as comfortable as ever. Many thanks need to go out to all those who have thrown their weight behind the continual little maintenance tasks required to keep this the most hexiest hut in the Hex.

*Ray Greenwood*

## ADDERLY STREET RATHBUILDING

Of those of you reading this article, I guess 50% have done the Witels, (60% of those in the past 12 months), and 80% will do the Witels at some point in their lives.

Adderly Street is a crucial link in this chain of mountain splendour, providing an emergency exit point, as well as rescue and policing party entrance. It has been closed for two years, because of less than desirable path conditions. This meet was designed at beginning the rectification process.

To my dismay, only one other person joined me.

The Witels is, along with Hoare Hut, the club's prize asset. Access to it is one of the main benefits of joining the club, but part of the reason that we get easier, cheaper access is because the club administers and maintains it. But that includes all of you: I'm not saying that you should devote your life to Zuurberg, but once in a while your input to Zuurberg would be appreciated. For those of you who aren't drawn to pine hacks, this provides an easy way to put your bit back into Zuurberg, and what more appropriate way than a path to the Witels ?

Reconstruction of the Adderly Street path is expected to continue for some time to come, so I urge you to stop sponging off the club, and put something back into the source of such pleasant memories. That's your challenge.

*David Acott*



"Anthropologists! Anthropologists!"



# TREASURERS REPORT

Jeremy Wakeford, the last Treasurer challenged me to write a report that people would read. I don't accept Jeremy.... so here is some drivel that's boring:

Let's start with some of the things we spent money on. We bought quite a lot of equipment including tents, ruck-sacks, climbing equipment, a bolt drill, and a pile of imported skis. We supported many of our members by sponsoring a Mountain Training Course a First Aid Course, and subsidised 5 July vacation trips. We spent some money on some parties that we organised, including a Cheese and Wine, Barn Dance and a Cocktail Party.

We encouraged many of the workers who helped build Pells hut to donate their hard earned cash back to the club, and many of them did, adding an unexpected R12 000 to our funds. Thanks to all of those who made this generous donation.

To finish off with, we also didn't spend enough, we know. We'll do better next year, and spend more on the things you like, we promise.

*Graham Shillington*

## WITELS ACCOUNT

### Income and Expenditure : Until 3 - 9 - 1997

#### Expenditure

Description	1997 Expenditure
<b>Administration</b>	
Stationery	42.85
Telephone and Faxes	0.93
<b>Activities</b>	
Entertainment	89.00
<b>Consumables</b>	
Petrol	1234.76
<b>Assets</b>	
Equipment	881.54
<b>Development</b>	
Repair and Maintenance	237.45

**Total** **R 2,486.53**

**Money left** **R 29,094.94**

#### Income

Description	1997 Income
<b>Opening Balance</b>	16,016.00
<b>Witels Revenue</b>	16,565.47
<b>Donations</b>	(1,000.00)

**Total** **R 31,581.47**

## INVESTMENT ACCOUNT

**Balance** **R 30,936.38**

# SPECIAL AND GRANT ACCOUNT COMBINED

## Income and Expenditure : Until 3 - 9 - 1997

### Expenditure

Description	1997 Expenditure	
<b>Administration</b>	209.37	
Stationery	27.50	
Photocopying	4,069.20	Includes journal last year
Printing	903.46	
<b>Activities</b>		
Clothing (losses)	523.42	
Entertainment	4,092.02	Includes cocktail party last year
Hike Fees (losses)	1,962.95	
Photographs	9.00	
<b>Consumables</b>		
Petrol	326.00	
Equipment Hire	532.00	
<b>Assets</b>		
Equipment	4,419.12	
Climbing Wall	453.99	
Periodicals	70.00	
<b>Development</b>		
Education and Development	1,996.40	
Bolts	2,080.19	
<b>Subsidies</b>		
Travel(include July Vacation)	2,996.00	
Travel(Overseas)	0.00	
Climbing	400.00	
<b>Other</b>		
Repair and Maintenance	1,660.46	
Miscellaneous	23.00	

**Total** R 26,754.08

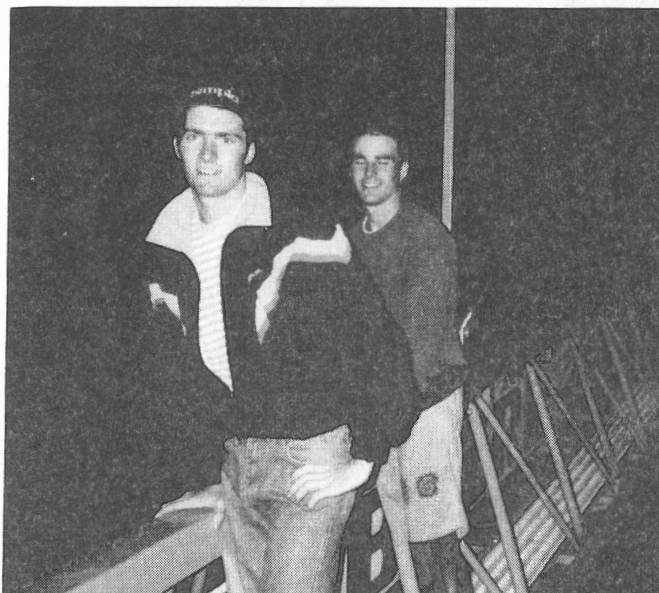
**Money left** R 19,912.21

### Income

Description	1997 Income
<b>Opening Balance</b>	872.00
<b>Subscriptions</b>	
Climbers	0.00
Members	26,885.96
Special	2,077.45
<b>Grant</b>	3,200.00
<b>Journal</b>	310.88
<b>Insurance</b>	1,500.00
<b>Miscellaneous</b>	20.00
<b>Pells Workers donation</b>	11,800.00

**Total**

R 46,666.29



GRAHAM, KEITH AND NEGRO - BOËR  
ON THE TABLE MOUNTAIN CRANE





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# DEVELOPMENT REPORT

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## I NTERNAL (CAMPUS) ACTIVITIES

The Mountain and Ski Club promotes hiking, climbing and skiing amongst UCT students. It organises a full program of day hikes, weekend hikes, climbing trips and longer 3-5 day trips during the holidays. These activities range from easy to very experienced grades and cater for the wide variety of members' needs.

Social meetings are held each Wednesday evening in the Sports Centre. Sometimes an outside speaker gives a slide show; other weeks members themselves share some of the details of their exploits in the climbing/hiking arena. These presentations are very informal and they inform members about various outdoor activities and adventures, including hiking and climbing. There are several fun events such as an introductory slide show and Cheese-and-Wine, quizzes and a photographic competition, a Barn dance and the Cocktail Party.

The Climbing Convenor has arranged a Beginner's Course and several climbing trips catering especially for new climbers have been successfully held. The indoor climbing



LEARNING THE ROPES

PHOTO : RINKY VAMVADELIS

wall has been open to usage by non-members for a nominal fee. This promotes climbing to a wider audience.

Over the past year 15 club members have completed the Advanced Mountain Walking Leadership Training Program. This is a nationally recognised course and is endorsed by the Mountaineering and Development Trust. This is a huge asset to the club, as we now have many more aspiring enthusiastic leaders to take trips for the club, and our program can therefore be more varied and extensive.

There were numerous requests for a basic First Aid course from members of the club. A good deal was negotiated with St. John Ambulance and 25 keen students successfully completed the course. Whether these skills are used in the mountains or around campus or town, they are invaluable!

The membership fees for the club are not very high, and the added facility of equipment hire has made it a more accessible sport. In fact one needs little or no gear to hike! Although our club does have a high membership which does draw people from all cultural backgrounds and walks of life, only a relative minor proportion of these folk become very involved with the activities. We should try not only to attract a varied bunch of people to sign up, but trying to involve more students (members and non-members) in the wide range of activities offered by the club.

## E XTERNAL PROGRAM (LEAF COLLEGE)

Our club decided to concentrate its development program with LEAF (Leadership Education and Advancement Foundation) College of Commerce and Engineering. We have in the past (1994-1995) been involved in a joint hiking program with the College, so we opted to restart our initiative here and see where it led.

LEAF College helps underprivileged black post-matric students to gain entry to Commerce and Engineering Faculties of Universities and Technicians, or acquire apprenticeship placements in these specific fields. This is done by a special arrangement which allows LEAF students to cover the first year of a UCT course over two years. The program is subsidised and is open to those that the College feel have the potential to succeed, but do not have the necessary entrance requirements for their career training as yet.

The purpose of this program is to introduce hiking (and associated appreciation and respect for nature) to a group of young people who were keen to participate and learn



**THE LEAF DEVIL'S PEAK HIKE**

PHOTO : RINKY VAMVADELIS

hiking and leadership skills. The MSC feels that by concentrating on a single group of young adults (who generally have had no exposure whatsoever to hiking, conservation issues or exploring various beautiful parts of the Cape Mountains) for a sustained period of time would best achieve this goal. UCT has many able hiking leaders, expertise at organising large trips and access to our mountain hut and equipment may come in handy. LEAF College already had hiking boots, backpacks, caps and rain ponchos - so the scene was set.

We scheduled 6 joint hikes (MSC and LEAF) for the year and they have been very successful. Before each trip a talk was held for the hiking club outlining the planned route, what to expect and the equipment needed. There have also been several opportunities (formally at these meetings and informally during the trips) to discuss a bit about the Cape history related to the area being visited, fauna and flora awareness, and other conservation issues. The students elected a committee whose function is to coordinate the loaning of equipment, lunch preparation and ensure that all

the keen hikers were prepared for the trip. The committee has certainly developed leadership skills and are very enthusiastic.

We intend to train some of the students as hike leaders and at the moment will wait until early next year (when their placements are secure and we are sure that they will be back in Cape Town) to run a comprehensive hiking leadership course. In this way the ex-LEAF students can become involved as leaders for the LEAF College Hiking Club, and even use these skills to initiate other hiking programs elsewhere. The LEAF students who come to UCT in the future will hopefully be more inclined and enthusiastic to join our club and be actively involved in the trips organised. In this way our external development program is actually also feeding into our internal development program!

## CONCLUSION

The Education and Development Portfolio has been very active this year and it has been a very rewarding time. It has links with many other portfolios in the club such as Conservation, Socials and Hikes /Climbs Convenors so there is scope for more co-ordination.

Also I would like to suggest that a sub-committee be elected to help run the activities. There is a lot of scope and potential for the portfolio to grow even more, but the workload for one person is too much. Maybe two other people could help out? (*A sub committee of 4 people has subsequently been elected!*)

I would also like to see more attention ( active ) being channeled into making our club more representative of the UCT population and if necessary taking specific action to try and break down some of the unseen barriers which prevent this. Of course the portfolio is not isolated and this action would need the support of the entire committee and the club members themselves.

*Caterina (Rinky) Vamvadelis*

### LEAF HIKE SCHEDULE 1997

DATE	TRIP ROUTE	ATTENDANCE
8 March	Kalk Bay Caves and Saint James Beach	24 students
12 April	Devil's Peak via the Saddle	55 students
17 May	MaClear's Beacon via Kasteelspoort Ravine	22 students
2 August	Cape Point Nature Reserve - [postponed due to weather]	
10 August	Cape Point Nature Reserve - [canceled due to weather]	
30 August	Constantia Corner	20 students
11-12 October	A Weekend trip to Haore Hut - Hex River Mountains	limit of 10 people
18 October	Cape Point Nature Reserve - [rescheduled]	limit of 20 people



# DATES IN THE HISTORY OF ZUURBERG

1878	The Surveyor General of the Cape Colony orders an Inspection Report of land known as Zuurberg forming part of Crown Lands in the Field-cornetcy of Warm Bokkeveld.	1952	Waaioek Hut rules established.
1879	The extent of the new farm Zuurberg is surveyed. The Witels Kloof is reflected on the survey diagram.	1955	Alan Yates describes the 'Adderly Street' route of entry to the upper Witels.
1895	Her Majesty Victoria, 'by the Grace of <u>God</u> of the Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, Defender of the Faith', grants Charles Macleod the Crown Land of Zuurberg for a sum of 200 pounds.	1957	Perry Refuge the 'permanent tent' erected as an emergency shelter at the Sentinel Camp. Impressive slalom performances at Waaioek as a result of good snow conditions.
1916	G.F. Travers Jackson enters the Witels from Sentinel Peak. He descends the kloof but climbs around the swims.	1958	Pells Hut named after Prof. Eddie Pells - one of the club founders and hut builders. Ski lift constructed in Long Gully. Peak Hut completed (now known as Mamacos Hut).
1928	A.B. Berrisford attempts a complete passage of the Witels from Mitchell's Pass - he also avoids the swims preferring to climb around.	1961	After 2 years of negotiations Neville Pells secures the purchase of Zuurberg at a cost of 2000 pounds (donated to the club). This required contacting the 7 scattered sons and daughters of the late Captain Heindrich Ludwig Scharmberg who owned the property.
1933	UCT MSC founded.	1962	New Base Hut built only to be razed by bush fire a few weeks after completion.
1936	Decision to erect a hut at Waaioek. Building started in December.	1963	Necessity for conservation of Zuurberg recognised including the eradication of cluster pine and other alien vegetation.
1937	C. Kaplan attempts a descent of the Witels from the hut. He crosses the first 3 swims but climbs out at Tunnel Swim.	1964	Second (existing) New Base Hut built.
1938	The Waaioek Hut (now called Pells Hut) is completed. This provides a base for exploration of the Hex River Mountains as well as a venue for skiing during winter.	1966	Map of Witels appears in UCT MSC journal.
1945	The MCSA obtains a servitude over a portion of Zuurberg. 3 Non-members perish in a blizzard while ascending Waaioek - Rules for ascent established.	1968	Ecological stress on the Witels noted - pollution becomes a problem. Decision to build a new ski lodge - site chosen and foundations laid.
1946	Rescue from the Witels - the flooding river necessitates carrying the injured climber out over Skurweberg, an exhausting 2 days of stretcher carrying.	1969	Design for new hut finalised. 4 and 1/2 tons of wood and 5 tons of aluminium organised, purchased and transported out to Loreley in the space of a week. The Great Waaioek Airlift takes place. SADF helicopters ferry material for the new hut to Pulpit Rock. An earth tremor starts fires on Zuurberg - rapid action by the Hut Convenors ensures the safety of the huts.
1948	First Base Hut built.	1970	First hectic party in the new hut. Earthquakes start more fires on the property resulting in another close battle.
1950	Middle Hut built. M. Mamacos ascends the Witels from Mitchell's Pass to Waaioek Peak in 4 and 1/2 days having swum across all the swims.	1971	Official opening of Hoare Hut by Sir Richard Luyt on 8 May - 100 people attend. Total cost of new hut R1400.
1951	Descent of Witels from Hut to Mitchell's Pass described in MCSA Journal.		



1972 The MCSA lead regular pine hacks in Middle Valley.

1973 The farmer at Loreley refuses access to Waaihoek across his farm. Many months later the matter is resolved only after a visit by the Deputy Principal.

1975 The threat of over exploitation and alien vegetation is highlighted again. Permit system for access to Witels introduced. Guidelines and rules for use of the kloof are formulated.

1976 There is a proposal to dam the Witels. A strip map of the Witels is produced for the club.

1979 Zuurberg declared part of an official mountain catchment area.

1980 A Witels conservation subcommittee is suggested and objectives are outlined.

1982 A new ski lift motor is installed.

1984 Fire threatens the huts again. More pine hacking takes place in the Witels Basin.

1985 Hoare Hut receives a toilet after 12 years of planning.

1986 The making of fires on Zuurberg is prohibited. An application form for entry to the Witels is introduced and applications are channeled through Sports Administration.

1987 The Waaihoek footpath is improved by Forestry. The Ceres Mountain Fynbos Reserve which includes the lower Witels Kloof is established.

1988 Hoare Hut receives a water tank. The re-construction of Mitchell's Pass begins resulting in the closure of the Junction Pool Parking Area.

1989 The club buys a chainsaw. Fire ravages the central part of Zuurberg. The Witels administration is revised and a computer program is incorporated.

1990 A management plan for Zuurberg is devised. A survey of alien vegetation on Zuurberg is undertaken.

1991 Pine hacks gain new momentum.

1992 A huge mid-winter search and rescue for Nicholas Penny in the Witels is unsuccessful. His body is never recovered.

Club member Cathy Mallory is paralysed after a fall during a pine hack. Access issues become a significant factor of the Waaihoek side.

1993 Club member David Tomalin falls and dies in the Witels during a permit checking trip. Farm Vredehoek (on the Waaihoek Side) is subdivided into 7 portions raising more access problems

1994 Encroachments by farmers on the northern boundary of Zuurberg identified. A survey is followed by leases of small parts of Zuurberg to the encroaching farmers. The Air Force airlifts pine hackers onto the slopes of Mitchell's Peak for the first time. All the Zuurberg huts insured for the first time. Conservation portfolio introduced onto the committee.

1995 Fire reaches Zuurberg between Point High and Zebasberg. Entire Waaihoek route badly burnt. Zuurberg Archives launched. Talks with MCSA regarding incorporating Zuurberg into a greater Hex River Conservancy. After many frustrating years of negotiations servitude rights of access are secured over most (excluding 1) of the farms on the approach to Zuurberg on the Waaihoek side. A 17 year access agreement over the Kweperfontein farm to gain access to Adderly Street negotiated.

1996 As a result of the servitude the new road to below Base Hut is finally completed. Large 25th birthday party for Hoare Hut is attended by many original hut builders. Exceptional snow falls - patches of snow well into December. Pells Hut loses it's roof in heavy winter winds.

1997 Pells Hut roof repaired with minor modifications. Air Force helicopters ferry material. Poorest snowfalls in club memory.

**Pierre Hoffa**

UPDATED AND EXPANDED FROM THE 1990 JOURNAL



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# REBIRTH OF THE HUT

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JUST LOOK AT THAT SKY, HELGA! THERE'S NOTHING BETTER THAN SLEEPING UNDER THE STARS!

I AGREE



BUT I STILL WISH YOU'D FIX THE ROOF!

*"I'll huff and I'll puff and I'll blow your house down!"*

These were the words of the Big Bad Northwester Wind to the Club in July of last year. After one of the Cape's worst storms, Stephen Holness came over Point High and was the first person to see the familiar shape of Pell's Hut evenly distributed over a 500m radius of mountain slope. The sight was not unlike that of a bomb explosion.

In 1936 the newly formed Mountain and Ski Club (MSC) decided that the best and safest way to enjoy the wonders of Zuurberg, was to erect a year round shelter. It took almost three years of back breaking work to carry 3 tons of wood and corrugated iron up the 900m ascent to the building site. Eventually the hut was completed and named after the first President of the Club, Mr Eddie Pells.

After surviving some 60 years of wind, rain, hail, students and snowballs the hut finally succumbed to the Cape of Storms. The entire roof was ripped off; splitting 15cm thick rafters like matchsticks and leaving the skeleton of the hut to fill up with snow.

As a result of the excellent winter skiing conditions and the change over of the committee, little was done about the hut until the start of the fourth quarter. Fortunately the hut was well insured, but the debate began as to whether it was worth rebuilding it.

Some of the most prominent members (past and present) of the club were called together. It was decided to replace the roof as the walls were still strong enough to use and it was deemed essential to have some form of emergency shelter in the area.

Things began to happen slowly over the Christmas vacation, but with the help of Mr Mike Mamacos, Mr Duncan Woolley of Lumber City Landsdowne and the Engineering Department of MITEK SA, a final design was decided on and the material was collected together in the first quarter of 1997. The only problem was how to get over a ton of material up the rugged path to Waaihoek. Some of us had already taken 10kg bags of cement up to begin repairing the walls during the Easter vacation and were not looking

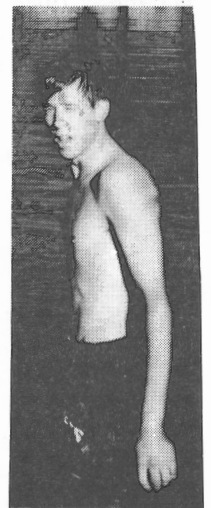
forward to carrying up rafters and 3.5m long corrugated iron sheets. Fortunately through our Mountain Club of South Africa contacts we were able to get a helicopter to airlift the material up. So on Friday 18 April the neighbouring farms were disturbed by the sound of rotors toiling away. Things now began in earnest.

On 8 subsequent weekends over 50 club members did their bit and soon Pells was looking like a hut again. The spirit on the site was quite unbelievable. It is true that hardship bring out the best in people. Even when workers were slightly hungover from a serious high altitude Birthday Party, they were prepared to spend the whole day smiling and hammering away. This camaraderie was due to the nature of the people involved and the remoteness and beauty of our site. It could easily be compared to the Upper Cable Station site.

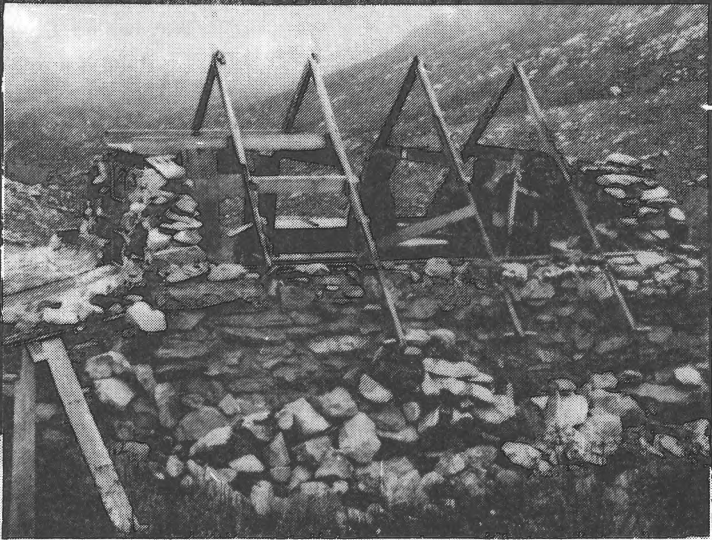
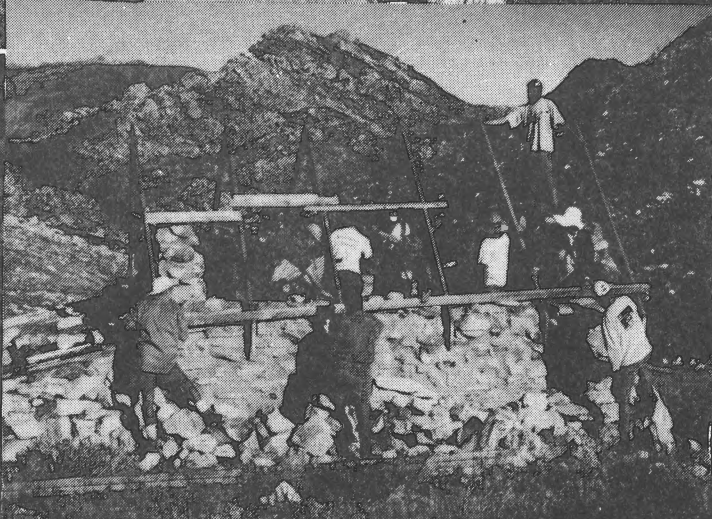
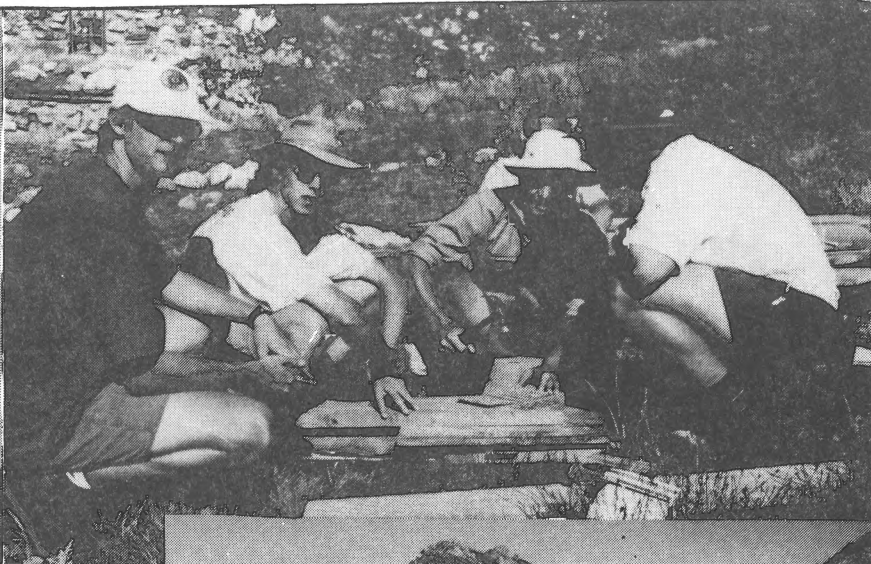
First the A-frame rafters were constructed and lifted into place. Next it was the turn of the 7m long purlins and the new window frame. Then came the silver insulation and the window and door side panelling. Finally the 3.5m long sheets of IBR sheeting were cut to size and put in place. The cutting of these sheets involved the use of a hacksaw that would have given the anti-noise pollution environmentalists, serious grey hairs. (Not to mention the sawers themselves.) In the evening of Monday 12 May, working by torchlight, Steve Hancock and I hammered the last roof nail home. A week later the first people stayed overnight in the hut and had a roof wetting party of sorts!

I am deeply grateful to all those who helped in the rebuilding process. It was due to your unquestionable dedication, tolerance and undestroyable sense of humour that this major project was completed in such a great spirit. All of you can take pride in the knowledge that you assisted in the rebuilding of this shelter that could help to save a life. I can only hope that the new roof will last as long as the original one did.

*James Cullis*









## "ODE TO THE FRESHERS"

"Please note that rain is forecast";  
Somber echo of a hike long past.  
"Meet at six forty-five".  
You crazy? At that time we're scarcely alive!  
Two little lines on a notice -  
The official start to this opus.  
The result: a cosy and committed little band  
Of the keenest hikers in the land.  
And so they met that Saturday,  
Bound to have fun - come what may!

The plan ran smooth as Marcel's Fro-Yo:  
A train of cars oozed over passes, high and low,  
Through Ceres to Kweperfontein Farm;  
So far, so good: no cause for alarm.  
Here we are - aren't you glad you didn't miss  
The famous Zuurberg, rockiest part of campus?  
Briskly up the jaded jeep track:  
"If Simon's not there, I'm going to crack!"  
We arrived at the dam already damp  
No swim just yet - hold out till camp.

Forty-seven hikers began the walk  
(You'd swear some were there just to talk!)  
At the front, the intrepid leader;  
Way behind, Dave the weedier.  
Fine and warm to hot:  
That's the weather we got.  
Up and up and over this rise;  
Just a bit further to the prize!  
On and on marched the determined troop  
Till some heads began to droop.  
Slog and sweat - too early to drop;  
C'mon folks, we're at the top!

And there it was: the precious jewel;  
We've made it chaps - there's the pool!  
Heavenly liquid, pain forgot;  
Stretch out in a sun-drenched spot.  
Sun about to set, up to the koppie  
They raced for the customary doppie!  
Once down, out came stoves in droves;  
Parsley, sage, rosemary and cloves  
Were added to oodles of noodles  
To make food fit for pedigree poodles.  
And so they partied, into the night  
Till they lost them: hearing and sight.  
Time to reflect on a hike to remember  
Before succumbing to the land of slumber.  
Be sure to join us for next year's treat -  
It's what we call "The Freshers' Country Meet"

*Jeremy Wakeford*

## FRESHERS' TABLE MOUNTAIN HIKE

As anyone in the Mountain and Ski Club knows, there are those that climb, and those that hike. It is a bold individual who attempts to do both. For this reason, the club often seems divided and it was with this in mind that I decided that as Climbs Convenor it would be appropriate to lead the Freshers' hike up Table Mountain to attempt to build a sense of unity. This was a scary thing to do since I quiver at the thought of walking to the mantle shelf to retrieve the T.V. remote.

Our party met at the information centre at a time far too early to be called morning, with all the enthusiasm of Roger Diamond on speed. To say there was a healthy foreign flavour to the group would be an understatement of considerable note. There were people from just about every country on earth.

We all set out from Kirstenbosch after paying the mandatory fee (the gatekeeper didn't buy my story that we were a multinational team of concert pianists there for the afternoon concert and should be let in without paying and be given free drinks).

Skeleton Gorge appeared to be no problem for most of the party, although I found it quite taxing. I guess I shouldn't have been surprised, the only exercise I get is walking to the fridge when I run out of easily reachable T.V. snacks. As we got to the top we realised that we were not exactly as numerous as when we set off. One of our party had gone ahead. This is where my already hot and fatigued, frazzled brain went quietly berserk. The rest of the party sat and ate lunch, while my deputy leader and I ran around frantically in search of our lost soul. After running hither and thither for what seemed like forever, we decided he must have made his way down the neighbouring Nursery Ravine.

I quietly pulled out my cellphone (hoping not to be spotted and abused) and dialled a friend to start searching the Ravine. We set off again towards Maclear's Beacon, the highest point. On the way we met with our absentee friend, who had raced ahead to make the summit so he could be down in time to move house. My feelings on seeing him

were ambivalent at the time.

Arriving at the summit was quite stunning and I started to question why I didn't do this more often! We sat and admired the view along with Mountain Club of South Africa members who were up there for their annual memorial service. After taking in the surrounds for a while, we headed back to the top of Nursery ravine to begin our descent. Along the way, we came across a display of Disas - a very rare orchid - indigenous to Table Mountain.

After spending the greater part of the walk along the top of the mountain talking about the meta-ethics of modern feminism, the males of the group were about to be lynched by the females. This was time for a diversion. Just off the path were the dams built at the turn of the century on the top of the mountain to supply Cape Town with water. We thrashed our way over to them and walked along the massive sandstone wall of the largest one, the Hely Hutchinson.

Having delved into the history of Cape Town, we were all suitably bored enough to descend. As anyone who has been down Nursery Ravine would know, it is one of the most beautiful places on Table Mountain. Most of the party trotted down like mountain goats on steroids, but I preferred the climbers approach: walk a bit - very slowly, sit down and whine about your legs hurting, get up walk a little further and repeat.

Finally we arrived at Kirstenbosch again, legs scratched, thighs aching, feet screaming, tired and hungry, but somehow strangely fulfilled.

Well so much for unity, I hope we're holding the next Freshers' Country meet in sports hall three!!!!

*David Pothier*



# Mountain Leadership Course



The course was jointly attended by NACH'S, NAFF'S and NPOW'S students. Their objective was to become more knowledgeable and useful in the mountains, especially in leading a group of people. The course was a success, but "there is still a lot to learn". We came together on two weekends and during the week we attended two evening classes. The weekends were under the supervision of the qualified mountaineer Euan Waugh. In his office, the Cape Fold Mountains, we improved some theoretical, but more particularly the practical skills which were a lot of fun.

The whole group consisted of UCT and UWC students. Euan divided the group into four groups each containing five members. This turned out to go very well, and everyone got on.

Anyway, the start of the first weekend was on a Friday night. First we were introduced to the UWC group and then to the huts, which were situated in the Northern Cederberg in a place known as Wolfdrif. Our camp was located on the banks of the Brandewijnrivier. That evening we had a BBQ, which was very popular with the UWC group, who organized their food together, and a few UCT'ers, especially the vegetarian. Others just ate Pasta.

The following morning, after a night fighting with spiders, we started off with lectures about map-work and compass bearing skills under the trees' shadows. After the fight with maps blowing in the wind which was an exercise on its' own (maybe this will come in handy some day), we started our practical compass bearing skills. This was a lot of fun and many of us were reminded of our childhood, in that we had to run around searching for a new set of bearings. Unfortunately one marker was placed on the other side of the Brandewijn and not everybody was too keen for this cold river crossing. But during the day when it became warmer and the wind fated away most of the group went down river for a refreshing dive.

Late in the evening we went well dressed to the starting point of the night hike. Euan, the man with the GPS system, barely could find. Everybody was very enthusiastic and we successfully navigated our way over the designated route with no paths and only a map, compass and torch to lead the way. Only Rinky wanted to lead the group singing, but not everybody wanted to hear that strange meowing on that beautiful, silent night. That night we almost had a good night sleep - since Rinky was now singing in her sleep, with the brothers Warwick, David and Ross as background singers, but ach, in the mountains everybody is a little bit different.

We started Sunday with a flash back and continued with a new item. River crossing. Bad luck for us, because that day was even colder then the day before. Indeed it is not easy to become a real leader. To end the weekend we had a lecture about food which made most of us wanted to rush back home to mummy's delicious cooking.

The evening classes were given on Tuesday and Thursday on Middle Campus, (you know were it is, just get your bearing right!!! HO HO HO.)



DAVE'S CUSTARD ?

PHOTO : RINKY VAMVADELIS



The first class was about what kind of mountain clothes etc. there are on the African market. Most of the stuff the poor students can not afford! The second class was a lot better, because this time we had a coffee break with biscuits. The lecture was about how to organize a proper hike as a leader. This was an interesting and informative evening lecture and with a lot of abbreviation you only find out if you are going to do this MLC.

The second weekend we started in Du Toits Kloof, but this time without the UWC group. Unfortunately leader Michael was injured and had to cancel, but we brought one chap from UWC - under one condition: that he had to bring the marshmallows with. By the way he was good in playing at chubby bunny, but the record for that Saturday evening was held by leader Ross.

Anyway, the beginning of this weekend had a dramatic change. In fact, to be honest, I can not remember the reason, however it turned out all right because we slept in a hut instead of in the tents. During the day we did some safety on steep ground which was a very interesting section of this course. We learnt about rope work (i.e. various types of knots) and how to secure and manoeuvre a party across tricky and steep terrain. This included climbing, belaying and manual abseiling. Two of our leaders had to make a quick get away. One had to get the key of the hut and the other, with some delay, had to rush off to be best man. What happened that evening is under **CODE**, I am sorry I am not allowed to tell. On Sunday we mostly continued the day where we finished of yesterday. But the final action of the course was the climax of the course. Everybody had the swing of their life. A few afterwards with wet shorts. Was it from the fear of bridge swinging or the river beneath it? Ross!!

Finally I am glad I joined this course, it was very informative and sportive but most of all **LEKKER**. I hope to see you SA. Mountaineers on the summits of the Alps one day and that the next course would be just as much fun as this one was.

*Wouter Westendorp*



## When lost at night, smell your way

The day dawned dull, gloomy, thundery and very rainy, but by lunch time the rain stopped, allowing some respectable weather in which to enjoy an evening stroll.

Around 5pm our able-bodies and sugar-free leader led us confidently around the base of the Sentinel in Hout Bay to the seal colony on the rocks at the back. It was not only seals that we saw but a rather excited whale as well.

From here we headed up to the saddle then up the often indistinct path, crossing the Hillary step at mid-height. At the top, all 8 of us shared a rock with the trig beacon. When the drinks came out, the trig beacon got nothing.

Unfortunately a cloud bank appeared and a true sunset, it was not to be. We did however, manage to stop the cloud with the pink lining. Shortly after sunset our happy whale gave us a wonderful treat as s/he began merrily jumping up and down, all the while swimming away into the deep blue yonder. We also spotted a black eagle being harassed by two seagulls.

Soon afterwards we wondered lazily down the mountain in the semi-darkness and followed a path which landed us, somewhat confusedly, at the top of a steep slope. At this point torches and noses came in handy. We began gingerly picking our way down the hill and were soon able to follow our nose towards our target - a sewage plant - which we knew was near the car park.

After a quick discussion we headed for St. Elmo's where our patient waiter had to put up with 8 hungry and surprisingly thirsty hikers. Our table soon turned into a war-zone as we began shooting bits of paper at each other through our straws. Much confusion was caused by Axel who then passed a ping and a pong in opposite directions around the table. After pizzas or desserts the war games continued in the form of an ice fight which resulted in Ray and Maria having cold backs.

Personally, I can't say I've ever had this much fun on any MSC meet and it certainly was the **best** way to end the academic year. Thanks All !!!!

LEADER : MARIA LOOPUYT

*Jayson Orton*



# United Nations Hiking Convention at Cape Point



The first Saturday of the academic year witnessed the inaugural convention of student representatives of the hiking nations of the world. The congregation took place at the scenic location of Cape Point, and was hosted by the University of Cape Town's Mountain and Ski Club, with that institution's Chairperson being unanimously elected as secretary-general (it was a one man, one vote election: Jeremy simply elected himself).

The following delegates comprised the foreign contingent. Steve came all the way from Namibia. The United States of America, true to form, sent a strong delegation, all with characteristically un-English surnames (Schwilk, Widmann and Altneu). Canada, proud of its Olympic tradition, sent Nathan (down-) Hiller from Calgary. From across the Atlantic came Dawn from England, who felt quite at home in the dawn rain. The flatland on the opposite side of the channel, the Netherlands, sent Timo. Marion hails from Basel, Switzerland. Her Austrian neighbor, Katia, is appropriately enough a Political Scientist. Germany sent a Sociologist, Ralph. Last, but certainly not least, came Trond S. Sagland, the convention's self-appointed chief photographer. Unfortunately, although they were invited, the French connection failed to materialize. The Russian delegate, Anna, declined to participate on account of Cape Town's harsh weather. Two of the Dutch representatives, Noortje and Femke, withdrew in protest upon hearing that the walk would involve a one hundred metre ascent.

The first item on the agenda was the stunning view of the two oceans from Cape Point. Unfortunately, the curtain of cloud could not be raised immediately, so the ice was broken over steaming cups of various hot beverages. When the weather abated slightly, the secretary-general suggested a relocation to Dias Beach. Once there, it did not take long to reach a consensus: the original plan of a mellow (*translation: sociable and non-strenuous*) walk would proceed.

The first section of the route followed the shore-line southwards from Olifantsbos. The secretary-general-cum-tour-guide pointed out local avifauna, including numerous specimen of the endangered African Black Oystercatcher, Egyptian Geese and Caspian Terns. A commemoration lunch was staged on the wreck of the Thomas T. Tucker, an American Liberty Ship which run aground in 1942 whilst attempting to evade a German U-boat. There appeared to be no hard feelings. Shortly thereafter, the group turned inland, and wound its way through indigenous fynbos,

bontebok and ostriches until arriving at Sirkelsvlei, which was greeted with dead pan expressions by most of the delegates. As a token of hospitality, Jeremy handed around marshmallows at the ensuing compulsory break. The final section of the route was amicably uneventful.

In conclusion, the summit was held to introduce hikers of different nationalities to one another, to experience the varieties and vagaries of inter-continental perambulatory lore and custom. The only thing lacking was a summit. Nevertheless, the event did not fall flat, and was by all accounts a pinnacle of success. The caucus resolved to call a further series of conventions at various other locations in and around Cape Town.

SECRETARY-GENERAL AND MINUTES TAKER

*Jeremy Wakeford*

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## MEANDERING IN THE MIST AND SOME GORGEOUS VIEWS

Jonkershoek is a beautiful area with spectacular views, we would have been able to experience its beauty properly if it hadn't been for the mist and rain. We started our walk at the turning point of the circular drive. The path rose steeply in the beginning but soon leveled out to a contour path that follows a panoramic route up the valley, across the top and down the other side. It was interesting to see large numbers of King Proteas and Pincushions and we could hear the calls of the different types of sunbirds that feed on the nectar of these flowers, in the mist. We did not see much of the view until the path dropped down out of the clouds and the Jonkershoek valley spread out before us. The whole walk took eight hours and is about 12km, at a leisurely pace and is definitely worth doing again when the weather is better. We walked with a group of students from the University of Stellenbosch's hiking club. It was great to meet and walk with people from a different university, plans were made to keep in touch with them and to do the walk again sometime.

LEADERS: JEREMY WAKEFORD &  
NICO HOLTZHAUSEN (UNIVERSITY OF STELLENBOSCH)

*Emma Sealy*



# PRICKLY PEARS AND TEQUILA

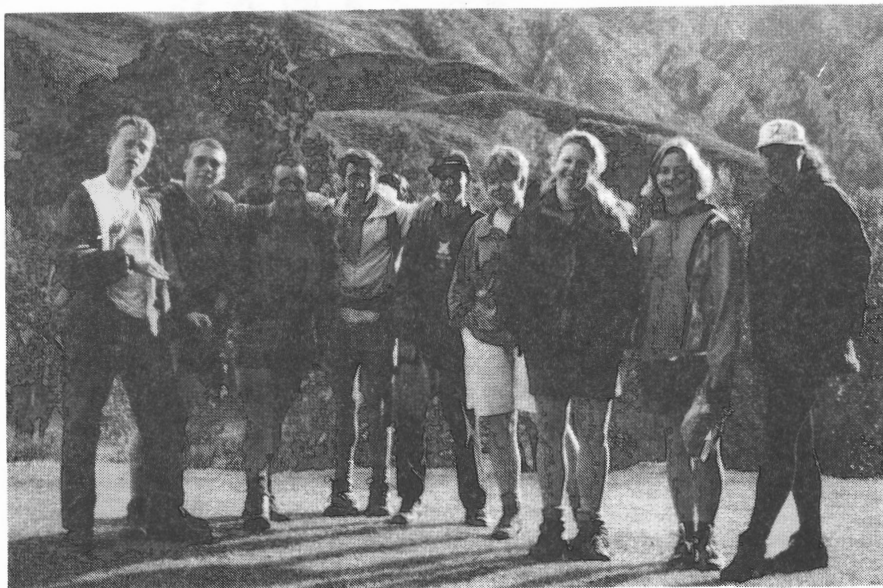


PHOTO : CARYN MAXWELL

The Dassieshoek Trail is two day circular hike through the foothills of the Langeberg Mountains next to Roberts. The first day involves a distance of 23km and the second day 15km.

Realising that the first day would take us at least nine hours, we reluctantly agreed to meet at 4:30am, to leave Cape Town at 5:00am. As we departed from UCT, it was clear that some of the group were functioning on less than the ideal amount of sleep.

We eventually met up at the start of the hike after one car had been directed to the start of a half marathon at Worcester. After 1.5km along a tar road, avoiding stray golf balls from the adjacent golf course, the trail enters farmland through a gate that took us a while to find, considering that the trail has been rerouted.

The first day takes one through Karoo Scrub, with many aloes in bloom, gradually changing to fynbos. The path is never too steep, dropping occasionally to cross streams during the second half of the day. The Langeberg range forms a spectacular backdrop, with the imposing Arangieskop beckoning to be climbed another day. Prickly Pears along the way help to enhance the desert atmosphere.

After nine hours of hiking, we reached Dassieshoek Hut, a converted farmhouse the accommodates thirty people. We found that the other group on the trail, having reached the hut long before us, were arranging copious amounts of luxury food and bedding. It is possible to drive all the way

to the hut, so any items that are too heavy to carry in a backpack can easily be brought straight to the hut. Many of our group were highly envious of the other group.

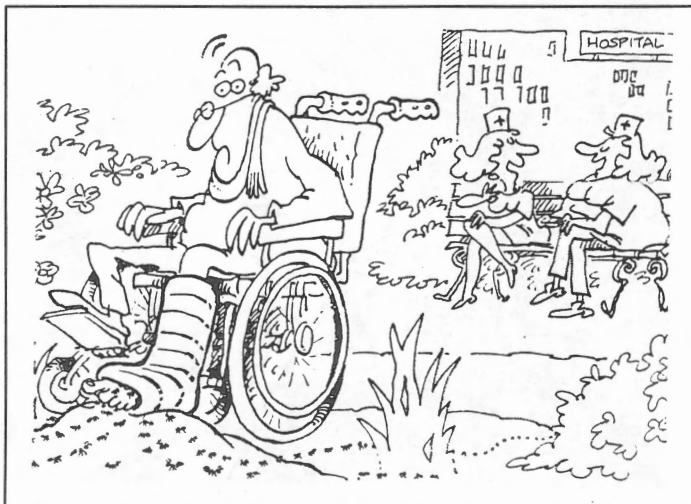
Sundowners were enjoyed at the end of a sunny day. Tequila, however, was only present in the form of the song, whistled incessantly by Terry throughout the hike almost becoming a theme song. Saturday evening was spent eating our spartan hiking food, playing word games and telling jokes. We could all tell that Wojtek had recovered from feeling ill earlier in the day - he kept us entertained, with a little help from his friends.

The second day is completely different from the first, passing through farmlands and also running parallel to a river for several kilometers. There is a rock pool along the way, which is swimmable in summer. During our lunch stop next to the river, Erna, Terry and I were informed by some younger member of the group that we won't live to see Halley's Comet again. See you in sixty - five years time!

We returned to Cape Town in one piece, Erna's car surviving a near break down and the occupants had an argument with a tow truck driver. The success of the hike was confirmed by the fact that we had completely avoided a rainy weekend in Cape Town.

LEADER : RICHARD MILNE

*Alan Shapiro*





# The Mission

# SPLASH

Scenic drives rule (for tourists in a student's disguise anyway) - the drive along the coast was very nice to start with. Colin got especially lost but luckily found a farmstall so he didn't starve, while the rest of us waited in anguish. Anyway, off we went. Minding the leopards while we eased on up the gorge. Taking some time off for the group picture. Lunch came early, just before the ladders which would bring us up to the amazing waterfall, at the top of the gorge. The highest rewarding-view-over hike-length-ratio I've encountered so far!

After a bit more to eat we rambled out of the gorge and zigzagged up to the top of the hill overlooking the Botanical Garden. The mission was to do Betty's Bay's complete tourist program. Next stop: Jackass penguins. There were more penguins to be seen on the notices, showing the way, then we found near the water. Spotting the fattest Rock Hyacinths ever, made up for that though.

Sand boarding was the final mission. Alan took the job pretty seriously and was eventually spotted gliding down the dune with appreciable speed. The rest of us just bodysurfed down, which was a lot faster. At the bottom, Freud would have been intrigued to see a couple of women sculpting the body of a pregnant woman on top of a man. *What do these dunes do to people?*

At the end of the day Collin gave Rinky her number plate back and made peace over some excellent Italian ice cream.

LEADER: RINKY VAMVERDELIS

*Renate Ruitenberg*



PHOTO : RINKY VAMVADELIS

The initial trip to suicide was postponed due to unpleasant weather, so the trip was rescheduled for the following week. Although this trip is very popular, the number of people was limited to permit of 12 (of which a total of 5 managed to get hold of a wetsuit and come along). There was also a problem that no one was available to lead the kloofing (the leader was involved in mental enrichment which left his lazy younger brother.) Who didn't exactly jump for joy about getting up at 6:00 am to lead people down what he remembered to be a cold long river.

We met at 7:00am and the five of us headed off in one car to the start, making a scheduled stop at the local Grabouw Spar to have breakfast and to pick up lunch. Arriving at the car park the leader went off to lie to the ranger about all the emergency equipment that we had while Chris carefully diluted Whiskey and coke to the desired strength. The weather was perfect - no clouds or wind and hot temperatures, make the thought of swimming in the cold mountain pools a dream.

We walked in, to the start of Riversonderend and hid our dry clothes and then walked to the beginning of Suicide George. Hauling on our wetsuits we noticed how the guys looked like Navy Commandos, while the girls looked as if they had been attacked by a knife-yielding-dwarf who had strategically sliced their wetsuits. The bum-slide above the path introduced us to the temperature of the river and to the fact that rock is harder than flesh. The first jump left one hesitant Dutch girl gripping an innocent bush. So much coaching was needed, but after that we just fed her with coke and she didn't have any more problems, well... The higher the jumps got the faster the coke went and cries for valium were heard echoing. To avoid having to walk all the way to the bottom of the river we doubled back up the Riversonderend at the river fork. This way we did all the jumps in Suicide and an extra one in the Riversonderend. The whole trip was incident free, except for the last jump where Brain chipped two of his teeth. We walked back out of the Kloof and put on dry clothes and headed back to the car for strong bottles of home-brewed beer. Arriving back at UCT, the car broke down and despite our efforts of looking very manly the damn thing wouldn't start so we left it there to the mercy of Campus Control.

LEADER : TIM SHILLINGTON

*Tim Shillington*



# Vive' la Francois



After starting out from the Info centre at 7:00am, to the accompaniment of much grumbling, we sped off in the direction of Worcester. Having cruised smoothly over the barely noticeable irrigation humps across the dirt road, we disembarked at the parking area, collected ourselves, stowed our wine and began to push up the mountain after Jeremy's rapidly receding pack.

The views on the way up were very impressive and the group made fairly good time; except for Dave, who kept lagging behind muttering something about 30+ kg packs and stress fractures while sweating like a hog in tar. We arrived at Hoare Hut, after passing a very sorry looking Pell's Hut on the way, to much relief - having taken about four hours for the ascent. While a small group of ultra-enthusiasts then sprinted off to the top of some peak for sundowners, I took the opportunity of looking the hut over. I was impressed by the comfort and extent of the facilities. A functional kitchen, central lighting and gas stoves were all laid on. While I wasted my time lazing about, Colin and Pierre worked industriously at the gas stoves while Francois [▲] was busy bemoaning the condition of the ski's

After a delicious supper we were all but asleep when some bright spark decided on a sing-along. Francois, his humour sufficiently whetted by a good deal of port and sherry, as well as the better half of a bottle of whisky, immediately seized on this as a plan worth executing. The mountain rang to the sound of French folk song, and a colorful variety of pop tunes. A small band of us merrily joined him, although some suggested beating him instead. Francois was undeterred by the dark looks and we rallied round him and the business end of his whisky bottle until later into the morning.

We were greeted on Saturday morning by our worthy leader Dave bouncy in chirping "Scorpion and Tarantula anybody? Anybody for Scorpion and Tarantula?" Seven of us dragged ourselves from our beds and out into the morning sun, leaving Francois doing a remarkably good corpse impression.

The first premonition I had that this little day outing may not have been such a good idea was when a bloody great rock leapt up and bit me on the shin, before falling to the ground and lying so still you swear it never moved. In fact there seemed to be several of these around, since the only people who made it though unscathed were Pierre, Jeremy and Dave, perhaps they were too fast for the rocks.

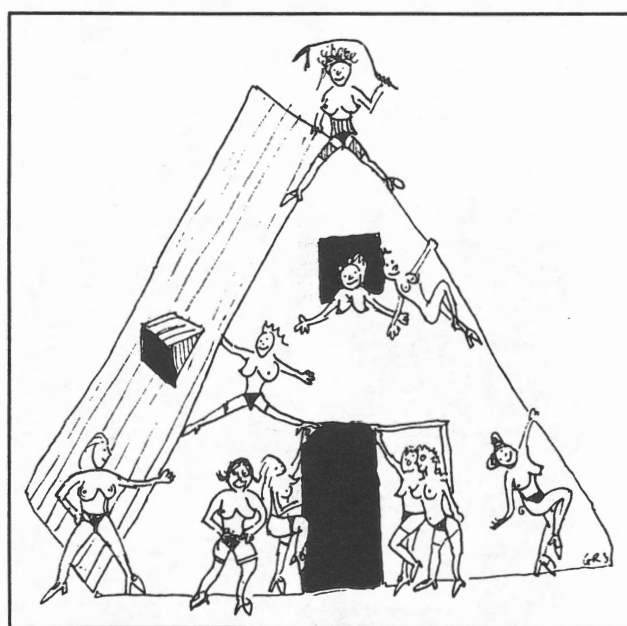
At the top there was a excellent view of the slabs from a different angle, as well as the surrounding peaks. At the top of Tarantula Dave uncovered a store of old messages, some

dating back to the 1930's. We sat eating lunch and admiring the view while he sifted through the bits of history. At this stage Pierre looked about and, seeming to pick the biggest peak in sight at random, suggested climbing it. I was not up to climbing Pic Delville however, so I headed back to the hut to try my hand at some maths. Having spent an enjoyable afternoon cursing calculus, we whiled away the evening cooking, playing chess, and relaxing, after climbing up Waaihoek to watch another spectacular sunset.

We started packing early on Sunday morning and left at about 10:30am. At the top of Rocky Band we ran into an elderly gentleman traveling alone who was off to do the Witels. Pierre managed to persuade him that this was reckless to say the least. After thirty minutes of persuasion he decided to abandon his plans and walk down with us. We took the walk very slowly, stopping to swim at middle and base pool, which was really nice. We left at about 2:00pm for Cape Town, having enjoyed a very relaxing weekend.

LEADER : DAVID ACOTT

*Alan Matthews*



**WHORE HUT**

After the name change or a first year impression of Hoare Hut

BY : GRAHAM SHILLINGTON

## "TWO FACES OF THE WITELS"

I could have kissed the weatherman. "Fine, no rain," for the next five days. Man, it's gonna be a goodie! I met the group at the customary MSC point of departure: the celebrated Info Centre on campus. They were all there: Ross "Born to Climb" McDonald, Carel "If in doubt, ask" Haumann, Troye "The Bugman" Wallett, and Karen "Physio" Lister. We piled into the two vehicles and made a quick getaway. Lunch was a relaxed affair in the shade of the oaks next to the mill (you follow?).

Not long after, we were staring up at the wall of rock they call Waaihoek, trying to convince ourselves that our packs weren't too heavy. They were. Nothing like a bit of delayed gratification to enhance the joys of the kloof, I told them. Yeah, right. Up and up we trod, hot coals burning in the quads and calves - hey man, it's all part of the experience! Little Agony, Big Agony, Hagga's Hill, a refreshing dip in Middle Pool, past Middle Shack and on to Grassy Triangle: "Hey, I can make this." And then Rocky Band: "Are we there yet?". Finally, Point Hi



DISA FALLS

PHOTO : JEREMY WAKEFORD

("What a relief; check that view; man, that was easy!"). And so, past the forlorn wreck of Pells, round the bend and up the hill to the heavenly hexy Hoare. After a brief pause to catch our breath and lose our packs, we staggered on up to the peak, where we witnessed one of those awesome sunsets. Grumbling stomachs soon demanded to be fed, so we scampered back to the hut to join Rastus for a hearty meal and a less-than-peaceful night's sleep.

The next morning dawned clear and mild: "Let's get away early to beat the heat." And so we did. Joints jolting, we tottered down the stony incline until at last: Heaven! Paradise! The delicious river rapidly dissolved away the pain. "This is it - this is why we live!" And so we followed the course of the Witels, past the awesome Disa Falls, the breath-taking duo of Groenwater Falls, through dark caverns and lazy pools until Tunnel Swim spewed us back into the afternoon sun. It wasn't long before we reached Camp Sandy, our home for the night. We fell asleep with the music of the river filling our ears.

On the third day we rose again, and proceeded to follow the meandering river. A while later, we turned up a tributary, drawn by the magic of Rooiwater Kloof toward the heart of darkness. Five explorers waded through black and orange pools, clawed through bearded trees and slithered up slippery watercourses in search of what they knew not. The suspense was heightened by Carel's haunting question: "Is this really necessary?" The answer emanated from the kloof itself when our progress was abruptly halted by towering cliffs adorned with cascading waterfalls. Rays of light stabbed down into the dark pit in which we stood as icy fingertips played scales up and down our spines...

Back in the Witels, we let the river do the work. Effortlessly, it carried us through canyons whose sheer walls craved to be climbed; and so we obliged. In the redness of the evening glow, we reached our next camp, Breakfast or Whiskey. The fading light exhausted by a game of cards, we could resist the call of our beds no longer and gratefully slipped into a sublime slumber.

Something was tugging at me, trying to drag me to consciousness. More asleep than awake, I lay sprawled on my back with eyes tightly shut. But something was wrong - I could feel its presence, hear it in the silence. With mounting unease, I cautiously drew my eyelids apart to face reality. Pupils widened and stomach tightened: above me, a dark, menacing cloud was almost close enough to grasp. In a flash I vacated the security of my bag and shook the others awake. "Quick, pack up, no time for breakfast, let's go, it's gonna rain!" Check the map: upstream's shorter, but too many pools, too cold; down is long - nine km's - no choice.



Just after six, we were on our way. So, too, was the rain, relentlessly gaining momentum. Inch by inch the patches of dry rock shrunk until all was wet, slippery soles slowing us down. On and on we missioned, not daring to stop save for a quick check: "What's your address? Have a sweet. Keep it up!" The cold welled up from below while the wind and rain lashed our faces.

At about 10am we came upon the sign that indicated our exit from Zuurberg and we continued on our slithery way until we hit Swim Two Birds. Packs ahead of us, we cast off into the black void, not bothering to take off our raingear, so wet were we. An avalanche of driving wind and rain, funneling up the kloof, blasted us head-on and stopped us dead. Only by clawing our way along the rock wall of the canyon could we make any progress. Eventually feet gained purchase on sunken rocks, and I counted those around me. One missing. I turned round slowly, and in the distance through the pelting rain could see a red pack at the far side of the pool. Without hesitating, I stripped off my Lundy jacket and soggy t-shirt, ran along the side and dived into the frigid water. Swimming strongly, I soon reached Colin, who had an injured groin muscle and could not kick. Grabbing his pack, I dragged the two of them the length of the pool. Teeth chattering like a pneumatic drills, we were on our way again.

It was almost noon when we reached Stony Camp, our intended overnight stop. By now it was imperative to warm up, so we unpacked jerseys and got water on the boil. We rigged a groundsheet as a temporary shelter, and while sipping tea I contemplated the alternatives. Set up camp and wait it out, or press on and try to make it out before dark? The relentless wind and rain decided for us: we would continue. Trading wet clothes for dry to preserve those precious few items, we set off again into the wild fury of the storm.

We were a short way past Boulder Pool when the flood hit. I was standing on an exposed rock a third of the way across the river, organising a chain for the compulsory crossing, when someone opened giant sluice-gates upstream. I stared in disbelief at the rapidly rising water level. Within a minute or two, my feet were covered. Frightened into action, I shouted to the group to regain the bank. Sitting some yards away, we stared agog as the monster woke from its slumber and rose in powerful fury. In less than fifteen minutes, the once-calm river rose two feet and became a seething turmoil of white and brown.

As the minutes ticked by, I realised that the torrent would not abate. Noticing one of the group showing signs of hypothermia and another not far off, I

dished out some of my remaining dry clothing and hurried off in search of a camp.

I found a minute patch of flat sand under a small tree, and after tearing away some foliage, secured an area less than two meters by two; it would have to do. I rushed back to my group and gamely announced there was room in the inn. After stringing up Colin's poncho *cum* groundsheet as a makeshift wall, we hauled out our stoves and clumsily set about restoring vaguely respectable body core temperatures. By five o'clock all was done, and with the rain continuing to fall and the wind to blow, the five of us squeezed our way into three survival bags and lay squashed as proverbial sardines for the longest night of our lives.

I awoke, the silence quickly displaced by the gentle roar of the river. Ross slept silently beside me and, looking around, I saw the sky was clear. The nightmare of the previous trip was over, and once more I revelled in the laziness of a summer descent of the Witels.

### EPILOGUE

The fifth day of our December trip dawned cloudy but rainless, although the river raged on, trapping us in the kloof. By noon, we had managed to dry some clothes, but the slow ebb of morale, and fortunately also of the river, indicated an attempt should be made to exit our watery prison. This was no easy task, and involved (for me) a full-length dive (pack and all) across a strongly flowing section of the river and a desperate grasp of branches on the other side. After hauling myself out onto solid ground, I managed to find an easier crossing for the others further upstream. The next few hours were extremely difficult as we were forced into repeated crossings. Eventually, the river spilled us into junction pool and our adventure was over. In January, I retraced our steps with the other group in perfect conditions, and thus witnessed the other, mild face of the Witels.

*Jeremy Wakeford*

PHOTO : RAY GREENWOOD



# A Birthday Celebration in the Mountains



PHOTO : REBECCA GRAY

It feels quite ironic that this article is being written by the person who probably spent the least time at Hoare Hut's 26<sup>th</sup> Birthday party. However I was there for the part that really counts... the 3 course birthday dinner.

A lot of construction work happened in and around Pell's Hut in my absence. This was done by the dedicated few who clambered up in the dark on Friday evening or early on Saturday.

Due to other commitments Rod Finn and I were only able to start the long climb up late on Saturday afternoon. We stopped briefly at Point High to see the sun setting gracefully in the distance. A few kilometres further on the rest sat at Waaihoek Peak doing exactly the same but with the luxury of having a few drinks on hand. Needless to say there was no welcoming party when we arrived at Hoare Hut. Instead roles were reversed as we lit the lamps to welcome the now very festive others who started the party off on a good note.

Within half an hour of their return, dinner was served. We owed this speedy service to our Club Chefs Rebecca and Caryn and their assistant Jean. They'd been extremely productive that afternoon and had cooked up a magnificent feast. The lack of showers, mirrors and other such luxuries ensured a swift conversion from hiking boots and shorts to tuxedos and formal dresses.

The manual labour undergone that day was well rewarded when the scrumptious spread was laid out.

As starters we had health bread smothered either in shrimp spread or pate' and Pringles chips. The latter must be the

best invention of the 90's as far as hikers are concerned. They may weigh a little bit more, but hey... When it's a choice between chips or crushed crumbs, those few extra grams are not worth moaning about.

The main course was magic! Not only did it taste like heaven, but it was easily adapted to our varied tastes. Beef Stroganoff is what most people had. Minus the meat it made a vegetarian meal. Minus the mushrooms and cream it was perfect for those with allergies.

Just when we thought that we couldn't possibly manage another mouthful, Rebecca mentioned that her world famous tiramisu was about to arrive!

For details on the rest of the evening's activities I recommend a climb up to Hoare Hut and at least an hour to read what was written in the journal. You see, to you the reader, who is probably in the unfortunate position of having missed the weekend all together... our activities might sound a little obscure.

In the typical Hoare Hut tradition pancakes were served for breakfast. Even though we were still coping with the consequences of over indulging the evening before, they were just what we needed to create energy and enthusiasm for a final day's work on Pell's Hut. The skilled engineers James and Ewen joined us there and once again we had hours of laughter and fun.

Well, here's hoping that more of you will be there to celebrate Hoare Hut's birthday next year. Perhaps a few inspirational words by John Muir (founder of Yosemite National Park) will get you clambering up those hills.

*"Climb the mountain and get their good tidings  
Natures peace will flow into you as sunshine flows  
into the trees.*

*The wind will blow their freshness on you,  
and the storms will give you their energy,  
while cares will drop off like autumn leaves."*

LEADER : JEREMY WAKEFORD

*Nienke van Schaik*



## Warwick's Orienteering Fun

Sunday the 18<sup>th</sup> of May dawned grey and overcast. Upon arriving at Rhodes Memorial car park, I was met by Warwick, who informed me that we were starting at the lower car park, and that he was off to put up a few more control points.

People started arriving slowly, and when all the participants had finished with registration, Warwick described how the whole thing worked.

For those who don't know how orienteering works, here is a brief description. Contestants are given a 1:10 000 scale map of the area where the event is taking place. There are often map corrections to be made. In the case of Rhodes Memorial, there are paths shown on the map which are no longer in use. New paths are not shown on the map, as well as fences shown which no longer exist, so map corrections are fairly numerous. On a 1:10 000 scale map (1mm = 10m) objects such as large trees and boulders can be discerned. Contestants are also given a sheet with a description of the control points and a coloured card which must be punched at every control point. Every punch has a different pattern on it, so judges will be able to tell whether contestants have visited every control point. A typical control point description would be, "between two trees" or "boulder, height 0.5m, south side" or "earth bank, at foot". Contestants start at different times, and the first thing to do once you have started is to copy down the position of the control points from the master map onto your map. Next, you work out which way you are going to head to get to your first control point. You have time to orientate your map and to try and make out key features while waiting to start. The control points themselves are triangular 'tubes' made from a luminous materials, with a punch hanging down their centre and with two very important letters (e.g. ED) printed on them, which identify the control point. Once you have visited all the control points (having punched your card at each one), it's on to the finish, which is normally very near the start. There are normally courses of varying degrees of difficulty on offer, which are colour coded. The one on offer here was a green course, with 12 control points, covering a distance of 4900m and with an altitude gain of 250m.

There are always some control points which are harder to find than others, and looking for a "tree" when you're in a forest can be quite tricky. There is no better feeling in the world though, than spying that elusive control point in the distance and making for it as fast as possible, hurling expletives (in my case anyway) at branches and felled trees that get in your way and cut your shins to pieces. Once you have punched your card, it's important to get away from the control point as quickly as possible so as not to betray its' position to the other contestants.

The threatening weather on Sunday held off long enough, and all contestants had a good time, although some were in better shape than others at the end. Well done to Pierre and Rinky for winning this event. The results were :

1) Rinky and Pierre	1:40:12
2) Alan Matthews	1:46:21
3) Maria and Terry	1:49:15
4) Simona Boata	2:25:31
5) Warren Hurd	2:33:32
6) Wendy and Guy	2:35:53

Thanks to Warwick and Paul Macey of UCT OC for getting up early on Sunday morning to put up the control points and then taking them down after the event, as well as organizing the event as a whole.

Orienteering is the national sport in Sweden, and for those who haven't tried it, I can recommend it as a way of learning map reading skills, getting fit, and of course enjoying the great outdoors. Someone at UCT OC or PEN OC will be able to help you if you are interested. Just remember to take along a pair of gaiters or shin-guards, or both, to save your shins.

Warren Hurd



## DREAMING OF HIDEOUS HANG JAMS AND PAINFULL PINCHES?

After a week of horrible winter weather, the clouds parted and the sun came streaming through to make for some superb, shirts off climbing weather! Elsie's Peak offers some of the best rock in the peninsula with most routes free of bolts. This meant dusting off those nuts, hexes and friends... well at least for some of us. Top-ropes were set up for inexperienced members of the group, which offered them a chance to climb without the stress of having to place gear. The more hard-core dudes decided to do "Gemini Dream", a really cool 20 which got the blood flowing. After a peanut butter and jam zonk we tried a bolted 26 to the left of "Dream Street Rose" which felt like a 36 with hideous hand jams and painful pinches... Bloody Hell!

All in all a lekker day with some lekker climbing and back in time for the rugby and some beers - SA whipped the Australians 61 to 22 !

LEADER : JAYSON ORTON

Steve Hancock



## "A Foreigner's Introduction to Hacking Aliens"

I just got back from a four day "pine hack" and it was awesome. There are a bunch of non-indigenous species that invade South Africa's wildlife areas, and one of them is the dreaded pine tree. The main variety is a New Zealand pine that was introduced around the turn of the century and is a fierce motha. It drinks lots of water, which is scarce here, and it suffocates the indigenous fynbos. So it is a relatively common thing to go off into the woods and hack 'em down.

It's sort off odd to me to be killing trees, and I certainly felt bad. But on the other hand I had some kind of vision of being the fighter guy on DOOM using that chainsaw at random. So I went on this weekend with the Mountain and Ski Club of UCT and it was a wild bunch. We left at 7 am on Friday before Easter and got back about 11pm Monday night.

So I'm back and fired up!!! We kicked butt this weekend. Last Thursday I had organised a "sundowner" with a bunch of the foreign law students and so we took off to this beautiful beach for the sunset (about 20 people went in the end) and I didn't get back until about 11:30pm Then, of course, I hadn't packed or bought food for the trip. So I was screwed. I got back and told Dave and Di ( the family I live with - wonderful folk) that I was, indeed gonna go. Then Di said, well, it's too bad our chainsaw is an electric one. And I said, "What, an electric chainsaw?, that's kinda weird." So Dave and I began searching for it and eventually found it. "Ohhhh yeahh," I said at first glance. It was a nice fat husqi (husqivarna = sweedish man of war of the chainsaw family). A huge grin came across my face. And then a smirk. A big smirk.

But by that time it was like 12am or something. The saw had no oil, had to be tightened, needed a two-stroke oil combo. So I had to load the damn thing up in the car and took off to the Seven Eleven (which here are basically supermarkets). I did my shopping then headed for a 24 hour petrol station. It was pretty cool walking up to the clerk at 1 am with a big old husqi on my shoulder. I got some petrol, some oil and fired it UP! it was loud, but good, you know? I liked it. The guys working at the station were a little bit put off I think by my revving the chainsaw at 1:15am. There were a few customers during that time, too, and I'm sure it was a strange sight. Here was this American (you can tell by the baseball cap), revving a big chainsaw in the middle of a gas station at that ugly hour. I couldn't help it though -- the husqui said to me "I am hungry and I want to FEED..." The funny thing is that the club has 4 chainsaws already and so it wasn't necessary to bring any sort of equipment along -- they had saws, loppers, bowsaws, gloves. etc. All you needed to bring along was food and a good attitude. But you know me. I'm the kind to show up at a pine hack with my own chainsaw, ya know?

Nonetheless, I got back, packed and had the husqi ready by about 2:30am, then up at 5 for the trip to meet everyone. I ended up taking my Alpha Romeo, too. Dave, the trip leader, and I loaded it up with 5 chainsaws, packs, saws -- all this equipment. Then we shot off down the highway like a bat out of hell looking for trouble. And we found it.

I cannot even begin to explain how intense this weekend was. The most intense outdoor experience I have ever had, and that is no bull. The mountain range we were in was so remote and intense -- and it was only 3 hours by car from Cape Town. It is called the Hex River Mountains and we were above the Witels River. It has to be among the most rugged terrain in the world. I am not kidding. The hike in was 5 and 1/2 hours straight up, to about 2000 metres. The mountains were completely dry and covered with huge boulders and fynbos, which is a wide variety of prickly bushes, shrubby, small trees and flowers. Very thick, dense and about waist to chest high. With a huge pack on, chainsaw strapped to the back and four days worth of gear/food etc., it was so rough. During the hike up there were three times when we had to drop our packs and go in search of water. We had to break about every 10-15 minutes because it was so steep and it had to have been about 90 degree heat. Man, I thought I was gonna die. Really. It was so symbolic that it was Good Friday.

Not just the steep ascent, but also the rock hopping, loose rock, boulders and unsure footing the entire way made it rough. I was probably in the worst shape of everyone going and man, I can get up a mountain (without all that shit strapped on). jeysus christo man, it was intense. I bet I drank 5 litres on the way up and never peed. That just about says it all.

When we reached the plateau (after several false tops) things levelled off and the terrain changed. Thick grassy fields, about chest high. We trekked through that for about 1km, then came down a ravine and into our campsite. It was very rocky, with stark rock formations all round us, but we were in a sort of flat plane within the ravine, with a little stream running (dry where we were) but with small pools and a bit of flow about 200 metres below us. So we had a water source.

The sky was clear blue that evening and we got an awesome sun set. The sun went down fairly quickly over the mountain peaks, but you could see the red/orange glow above the peaks and on the backside of some of the surrounding peaks for a long while. Just incredible. As the sunset it lit up one mountain side off to our right and made it a bright, fire-engine red with a sort of glow about it. Kind of like the mountain were saying, "Thanks boys for coming down--"...



The trees themselves were another matter. In order to get to them, we had to ascend another ridge and then begin a steep, steep climb down a rocky ledge-ravine, where we had to meander back and forth along rock faces down for about 200 metres, until we actually arrived on the slope of this huge mountain face, that opened up into a amphitheatre-like shape. The face of the amphitheatre was at about a 30 to 40 degree slope the entire way, not to mention ravine-like depressions along the side of the mountain. We had to then trek across it, which was covered in thick fynbos vegetation, for about 1km in order to reach the trees themselves. This canyon-amphitheatre was in a huge mountain range, so off in the distance all of these mountains surrounded us, and the vegetation varied depending on which direction the mountain face was. Where we were cutting was much greener and more lush than the mountain we ascended to reach the base camp. It was intense bush and walking though it with these guys was really insane--they walked at this ankle breaking pace carrying hand-saws, chainsaws, fuel, food and water. Man it was wild. There were about 20-25 of us, and so it was a pretty good size troop. There were not a lot of animals about, but there was one extraordinary experience. While we were cutting on Saturday (we cut Friday afternoon through Monday afternoon and got back late Monday night) a troop of baboons came across the ledge above us. Big baboons, and they were howling and yelping. Pissed off that those chainsaws were invading their territory. Their yells sound like a mad man screaming or crying really loudly. It was sort of eerie. There are baboons near roads and at Cape Point that have attacked humans and will steal their backpacks, because they associate them with food. These baboons we saw were probably as big as humans, some a little smaller--so pretty big. With a sort of straw brown fur and black facial features. The ones in the wild don't much bother humans, I think because they don't associate them with food. And then there was the Husqi just in case.

I tell you what, a chainsaw is no toy, and that is the truth. The husqi I had was a man-eater. Thank God there were no injuries, it is a damn miracle. I spent a good portion of each day with chainsaws and then a portion with handsaw and "lopper" which is what they call a big hedge cutter. The pines were dense, man, and in that terrain was hard to reach. Some places you could cut down 5 or 6 without walking around at all, other places you had to walk up 10-15 metres before reaching another one. It might take a long time to get there, because you had to climb and boulder hop to get there.

Being out there with those guys was really incredible, a great sense of camaraderie. Everyone was working really hard, and in those conditions, and everyone was volunteering. About 20 in all. Mostly UCT undergrads, some postgrads, and some guys who had graduated 4-6 even 10 years previous. A pretty tight nit group. I felled some big ass trees, but I was by no means one of the most effective in the group. Not even close. I did get one 38

year old guy who was a whopper. I wouldn't say I reached the stage of "chainsaw cowboy" though. There were a few guys who were really, really into it. So into it that one guy, Dave Acott, took off up a cliff face above where we were, used climbing ropes, and hung off an almost sheer cliff face to get a big mother pine that was growing off the side of the cliff face. We all stopped to watch her go. It was wild, with the first motion of the tree falling, and then you see the fall. Then later that crackle and pop that comes, and finally there was about 10-15 seconds of free fall before it fell and slid along the mountain face. We would all yell out and whop and holler when a big one went down, like Lord of the Flies. Or if one pine was really, really tough to get down, put up a particularly good fight, everyone would come over and pee on it just to say goodbye and pay our respects.

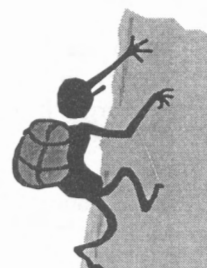
I was so so so tired, man. After the first few minutes of getting out of the car on Friday I was exhausted. The hike back up the cliff face each day to go home was so intense, and after such an intense day. We would get back, jump into the stream and cool off (and by this time its basically dark, 'cause we worked until about 5:30pm each day--it was intense (did I say that already?), then cook dinner. That little camp stove I brought along was just perfect. I basically had big carbo-load dinners, pasta with soya chunks, but was so tired by about half way through my pot of pasta I just couldn't eat more. And I was constantly thirsty. Constantly. I was drinking so much water I was waking up about 3 times a night to pee. Once when I woke up, I was so thirsty and I had to pee so bad. that I was drinking as much as I could gulp down while peeing outside my tent. It was that type of weekend. I have a totally new appreciation of South Africa. Man, it is so incredible.

The Mountain and Ski Club guys were really rock hard, man. Really hard dudes. The club owns this land (administers it for UCT) and so they can do what they want up there; its about 20000 hectares of mountains they own, not to mention all the other government land around. They have two cabins up in the mountain ranges at different points that they have built over the years, and there was a work party at one of them this weekend too. There were about 30 people at that. So you can get an idea of how big the club is. Anyway, it was a great time. I'm so worked today but I'm pretty energized, too. They have another pine hack coming up in three weeks and as long as my body says OK, I'm in.

LEADER : DAVID ACOTT

*Jerrob Duffy*

**GET READY TO RUMBLE.  
THINK BIG THOUGHTS.**



## In Search of Equus Zebra Zebra

**A**-root-toot-toot. This is the tale of an intrepid group of Ikey tigers who wandered into the Karoo in search of adventure, challenge and Mountain Zebras on the 2-6 April 1997.

It was an international group of tigers that set off. The pack consisted of Jeremy Wakeford, Colin Davidson, Gavin Jewell, Bruce Lister (all ware Suid-Afrikaners), Martina Widman (American), Renate Ruitenberg (Dutch), Kory McDonald (Canadian), Dawn Orford and Kevin Carter (British), Andreas Muller (German) and Michael Lawrence (Swedish). However, it proved to be a harmonious group with no need for UN mediation, although one or two members could have used UN help in pitching tents.

The trail itself consisted of three days: 9.2 km, 9.2 km and 7.2 km respectively. Clearly being super fit was not a prerequisite for this adventure. This, however, was not altogether a bad thing and there was plenty of opportunity to spend quality time combing the hillsides and valleys for Zebra and the like. The first day consisted of a walk around a valley, up a hill and down to Olienhut where our resourceful tigers demonstrated their culinary skills. The second day consisted of a walk up the aforementioned hill to a plateau, which was walked along until the descent to Karee Hut where our hardy tigers spent their second night. The third day consisted of a very relaxed (or should that be rustig) meander through the valley back to the base camp with its excellent facilities (including a freezing pool and warm showers).

Speaking of zebras and the like, this trail is aptly named for there were indeed a fair number of these striped ungulates to be seen. But that was not all (folks), as amongst the Zebra there were, inter alia, Grey Duiker, Klipspringer, Mountain Reedbuck, Springbok, Kudu and Eland to be seen by our sharp-eyed tigers. Most of these beasts were seen on the first and third days, with the second day consisting mostly of spectacular views across the Karoo, dassies and dodging lightening. After the strenuous third day, these Ikey tigers managed to do their varsity proud and summoned enough energy to do a game drive to see what else there was to be seen. This proved to be quite eventful, with the previously mentioned beasts all being seen again, as well as numerous Black Wildebeest and Red Hartebeest.

Life in the Karoo does not consist solely of mammals (contrary to the opinions of some ignorant people who would argue it does not consist of any life at all). A number of reptiles were spotted. These could well have included the likes of *Pachydactylus oculatus* and *Pseudocordylus microleidotus*, but these tigers were not ardent akkedis identifiers. They were more successful with birds, however, and managed to identify forty-nine species amongst numerous UFO's. This number included a Cape Eagle Owl, Black Eagle, Black Sunbird, Orangethroated Longclaw,

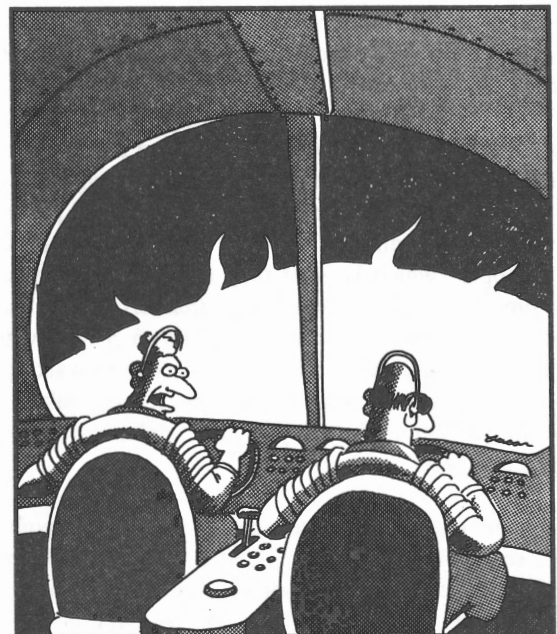
Swee waxbill, Pied Barbet, Cardinal Woodpecker and Karoo Robin.

For those readers who were wondering about the earlier reference to lightening, the Karoo (renowned for being a semi-desert, permanently short of water, etc.) proved to be quite capable of producing rain. Do not fret, this did not deter our tigers in the least and a bit of moisture in the air did nothing to dampen spirits (so to speak). The snow storm that had to be driven through on the way home (on the descent into Beaufort West) did catch these otherwise very worldly-wise tigers by surprise, however. One word of advice to anyone caught driving through a snow storm after an adventure in the Karoo: do not get out of your car during the snow storm without wearing shoes.

This really is an excellent hike for those looking for a break away from it all. It has the added bonus in that it is not discriminatory with regard to physical form and will allow you plenty of time to appreciate the terrain through which you are walking. The facilities are excellent (even the trail huts could have hot showers if you are prepared to fire up the donkey). One last word of warning: when camping at the base camp, be prepared to spend a significant amount of time scraping Whitebrowed Sparrow weaver guano off your tent. Thanks to all responsible for organising this great trip.

LEADER : JEREMY WAKEFORD

*Bruce Lister*



"It's no good, Dawson! We're being sucked in by the sun's gravitational field and there's nothing we can do! ... And let me add those are my sunglasses you're wearing!"



# NOORDHOEK PEAK JAUNT

Saturday 26th July saw the first MSC hike of the third quarter. The appointed leader (Caryn) decided to do some preemptive delegation by assigning Elijane as her replacement (she couldn't make it). Elijane promptly assigned Andrew the task of leading the rest of us to the start of the hike. (Don't tell anyone, but she didn't have a map either.)

Tammy set off at a blistering pace, closely followed by John, Timothy, Andrew and Frances. The strollers (myself, Kay, Steve and Elijane) watched the 'fitties' blast off up the trail while engaging in meaningful dialogue (so what's your name again?) and taking in the scenery (watch out for that loose rock). Patricia and Anna (the puffers) brought up the rear.

Elijane and I discussed the different kinds of hikers, namely the conquerors (the fitties), the rambles (the sightseeing strollers) and the unfit (the puffers), mostly regarding how once you become a conqueror you might as well just use a Stairmaster positioned in front of a nature poster. (Only kidding, I made that last bit up.) I suggested some sort of rating system so that a hiking group comprising people with the same rating would not become fragmented every couple hundred metres.

Halfway up the trail we came to a fork, and through process of elimination ('Chappies' was to the right) started up the left fork where the going got really tough (very dense vegetation). Some of the fairer members of

the party proposed doing a study comparing the scratch-resistance of shaved, unshaven and partially clothed legs. (Other factors included gait, height and tan factor.) I offered to be the impartial judge, but for some reason my offer was declined.

We eventually reached Noordhoek Peak at around 11am and had an early lunch. The view from the peak is quite spectacular. The peak overlooks Noordhoek Beach (duh!) with Chapman's Peak on the right, as well as Silvermine and Tokai Forests to the left and suburbs beyond. Elijane made up for not bringing a map by offering chocolate bars to all.

After recharging the solar cells in our tummies for a while, we decided to look for a different way down and set off along a tar road in the direction of town. We got to another peak that looked out over Hout Bay beach where we found large families with lots of dogs hogging the best spots. A little further along we found a group of yuppie paragliders styling for us. I think that every male member (and possibly a few of the more adventurous girls) resolved to "try that someday soon", and then promptly forgot all about the whole thing. There was no other way back but the way we came up, and we did not think that the paragliders would agree to piggyback us down, so we clomped our way back down the same way.

Oh yes, there was one accident on the way up: Frances lost her footing, scraped her leg ("looks more serious than it is" or something) and bled her way all across the mountainside, presumably causing many a rumbling stomach among the remaining night-time predators on the berg for several nights to come. If you don't believe me, just ask Kay. She was behind Frances and the fitties for most of the hike and noticed that she had blood "all over her pants" (she can exaggerate a little though) when she got to the bottom.

The weather gods were in a playful mood that day and let the sun warm our backs while reminding us with a coolish wind that they're not ready to let us enjoy long sunny summer hikes just yet.  
Until next time...

LEADER : ELIJANE DE VRIES



PHOTO : ELIJANE DE VRIES

*Garth Williams*

## PORCUPINES PLUNGE PRECIPITOUSLY OUT OF WOODS

Which of us Young Hopefuls of the Illustrious UCT Mountain and Ski Club can ever claim that *Table Mountain* is not a constant challenge, a source of dreams and aspirations, an ever present reminder, during the daily grind of lectures and campus life, of the freedom and adventure held within its towering buttresses and shadowed crags? Admittedly the Young Hopefuls' response to this alluring promise of challenge, excitement and really wild times just waiting on its soaring slopes is a trifle tempered at seven o'clock of a cold Saturday morning when one's lift hasn't pitched (twenty minutes late, *nogal*) and one's bed and oneself made reluctant parting. But there above Medical School Library lurks the beaconing mountain and I work hard on getting my enthusiasm going.

Eventually my lift arrives (Phil blaming Ianni vehemently for his tardiness) and we set off, three young ignoramuses in search of adventure, to meet up with Carel Haumann, that Leader of Men. Carel is waiting patiently at the entrance to the cable-car, preparing to take us to the Point of Ultimate Departure - which, it transpires, is around the back of the mountain on the upper slopes of Camps Bay. Those of us not eyeing the luring slopes of the Twelve Apostles above us with the eye of trepidation are staring with some satisfaction at the sea, delighted that we didn't have to slog up all the way from zero metres altitude. We park the cars, discuss who is carrying how much water, count heads (one, Carel, a 3rd Year Medical Student and a Leader of Men up Mountain sides; two, Phil, a 2nd Year Medical student; three, Abby, a 2nd/3rd Year Medical student and four, Ianni, *not* a Medical student), take a time check - it is now seven-thirty in the morning - and set off up the Pipe Track that ambles in so civilised a manner around the back of Bakoven towards Scarborough. Life is gentle, the view is good, the breeze is soft, the loads are light and the mountain's Menace Value seems to have dropped off remarkably.

The route (some seven kilometres long) leads up the Twelve Apostles along Woody Ravine, potter along the top of the mountain, and comes down via Porcupine Ravine, looping back to the Pipe Track and the cars. It is, as Carel informs us, an "easy route", involving a bit of rock climbing and a lot of steep incline walking. It is a highly enjoyable route : for all the "steep incline stuff", it is not too strenuous, and the occasional scuffle (or in Carel's graceful case, climb) up "B" grade rock faces adds a touch of excitement to the hike. It also has the advantage of taking one very quickly up a reasonable height : the view improves dramatically with ever face. There are a couple of rock chimneys to negotiate on the way. Although these are neither big enough nor long enough to practice *real* chimney-climbing technique, they still provide a challenge to the novice rock-climber, and gave the three ignoramuses a wonderful thrill of achievement when we'd negotiated

them successfully without Carel having to drag us up physically.

Carel made an excellent path-finder, regaling us with tales of the last (and first) time he'd done this route, with a pack of geriatrics leading the way. He encouraged us greatly the whole time by insisting that we were doing so well! Much better that the Cape Town Mountain Club Oldies had managed. Once we reached the top of the path we paused for lunch and further arguments about how much water who had brought, and lost Ianni. Deliberately : he had to dash off across the mountain to the Newlands side and home - project or essay or some such non-Medical student thing were awaiting his attention. This left the three Medical students free to wander along towards Porcupine Ravine, and free to bitch dreadfully about our colleagues and lectures.

The walk across the top of the mountain is extraordinary: after the scramble and slog up the slopes, Camps Bay and the sea stretching below one the whole time, the top presents a plateau of sun-bound silence, land and sky merging all around. We were shown some of the sights, such as the large pothole or small valley - waterfall, grassy banks and all - ideal for exclusive and private picnics in Summer. Then there was the cave. We were shown the grade "Z" climb up to it, from the one, light, airy side and the grade "A" slither down to it, from the other dark, tunnelly, grungy side. Carel said he'd done it before and felt no need to do it again, but suggested Phil and I might like to do our little speilology bit. Neither of us were up to the "Z" climb; both of us paused hesitantly at the "A" side slither. Pause pause pause. Pause. Hohummm! Phil indicated he may just be able to survive without having risked life and limb on a whim, but I decided that crawling into this grimy, overgrown and black hole was **good** for me, psychologically speaking, and **ventured**. It was very, very, very dark, once one had crawled through that hole in the ground; the cave entrance was around some corners and along a longish lowish narrowish tunnel. Deprived of my sight, my hearing became more acute. I could hear every word that Carel was addressing to Phil about the **terrors** of claustrophobia and the dark pressing creepy atavistic fears that assail one in confined spaces. I had to crawl through on hands and knees and tried hard not to think about spiders and dead bodies and scorpions and centipedes and vampire bats. In fact the only things I encountered were Phil, who'd braved it after me, and a huge sense of self-congratulation at having coped with the experience : I just *knew* that it would be good for me psychologically!

The final part of the hike was quick: down Porcupine Ravine and along the pipe-track to the cars. Question : how does a porcupine get down Porcupine Ravine? Answer: Precipitously, on all five limbs: arms, legs and tail. Especially if her shoes are less than the best in terms of grip. This path jack-knifes down the ravine at a

noticeable but tolerable incline, with no rock-faces and very little even in the way of rock -scrambling. The most difficult part of it was dealing with the loose scree which shifted drastically underfoot the whole time. The path had the great virtue of looking a lot steeper than it in fact was, so that one appeared to be plunging excitingly downhill towards the Camps Bay sea line, while in reality moving at an entirely safe pace. May is a good time of year to try this track, as it is still dry then before the Winter rains.

We emerged with a flourish on the Pipe Track a kilometre odd away from the cars, and wandered down to reach them about five hours after having left them. It made an ideal morning's walk, with the mountain and the sea view providing their usual thrill. The frequent changes of track, path and rock face meant a constant renewal of interest and challenge, so that the walk never became difficult or just a slog. It takes one to the top of the mountain - all those dreams and aspirations! A very enjoyable and easy way!

LEADER : CAREL HAUMANN

*Abby Paton*

## NEW LANGUAGE ?

With all the talk about a single European Currency, some people are talking about a common European language, with English being touted as the preferred language for communication, ahead of German. But the British will be asked to concede a simplified spelling to be phased in over a five - year period.

In the first year, 'S' would be used instead of the soft 'C'. Certainly civil servants will relish this news with joy. Also, the hard 'C' will be replaced with 'K'. Not only will this clear up confusion, but typewriters can have one less letter on the keyboard.

There will be growing public enthusiasm in the second year, when the troublesome 'PH' will be replaced by 'F'. This will make words like 'fotograf' 20 per cent shorter.

In the third year, public acceptance of the new spelling can be expected to reach the stage where more complicated changes are possible. Governments will encourage the removal of double letters, which have always been a deterrent to accurate spelling. Also, all will agree that the horrible mess of silent 'e's in the language is disgraceful, so they would have to go.

By the fourth year, people will be receptive to steps such as replacing 'TH' by 'Z' and 'W' by 'V'. During the fifth year, the unnecessary 'O' can be dropped from words containing 'OU' and similar changes would of course be applied to other combinations of letters.

After the fifth year, we will have a really sensible written style. There will be no more troubles or difficulties and everyone will find it easy to understand each other. The dream will finally come true.

## Port St. Johns to Coffee Bay

Like swallows migrate in winter, twelve UCT Mountain and Ski members escaped the rain and headed off for the sunny wild coast of the former Transkei.

The long treacherous journey from the Cape proved to be both long and treacherous leaving our hike leader and a few others marooned along the way. Nevertheless, a provisional leader was appointed, a good cheese fondue eaten and with spirits high, we set off to play goat.

After weaving along extremely narrow goat tracks on steep ground for most of the day, hanging from cliffs and almost losing a party member in an animal trap, we drew closer, all looking very much like those boggle eyed goldfish, to our luxury mud hut, sea view accommodation. Boggle eyed partly from exhaustion, partly from shock but mostly from the astoundingly awesome beauty surrounding us. Spectacular sea views from the long drops set in between subtropical vegetation, brown, bug infested drinking water and a warm welcome by piglets; this hike has turned out to be everything I had imagined and a whole lot more!

Day 2 proved to be more relaxing than the first and the local children were very helpful in giving directions - but for a price of course! "E-sweet, E-sweet", was the sum total of their English vocab and beware if you don't hand over that "Super C"! They may just send you up any old hill for a laugh.

After traversing several small villages and climbing over a few rolling hills, day 2 ended on a pristine beach. The arrival of our marooned party members, another striking sunset, a good supper and a bottle of OB's left us all goldfish eyed and very ready for bed. The alarm system designers went to work: pots, gas cockers, knives, forks, string, you name it. Just so much as touch the Hut door and ... CLANK, CLANK, CLASH... Hello!!!. The systems were all part of our safety precautions. After all it was the "wild" Coast.

The rest of the hike proved to be no less exciting. It took us through mangrove swamps, over numerous beaches, through shark infested rivers and subtropical forests. Although challenging at times, we had ample opportunity to soak up the sun, enjoy the good bodysurfing and many boat rides and have a good laugh.

The wild coast hike from Port St. Johns to Coffee Bay was a truly epic adventure. The last day left us all looking pretty much like Neanderthals. Neanderthals we looked like but Neanderthals with some awesome memories we were!

LEADER : ELIJANE DE VRIES

*Barry Staak*





# The ultimate ascent to Hoare Hut !

*Route descriptions for country routes are notoriously vague. Any of you who have tried to follow one will know that there are infinitely many 'obvious breaks to the right', etc, so I'm not going to be precise.*

On Wednesday 10 Sept, six of us descended from Hoare Hut after a vac meet. Much coercion on my part finally persuaded Carel Haumann that the trad gear in our vehicles should be put to good use on this route. We had a vague description of the first ascent by Bert Berrisford in 1933, but otherwise our route finding was limited to what we had seen from the Waboomsriver valley.

In the late afternoon, we ascended to Hoare Hut in sweltering heat which gave us a taste of what summer could be like. Equipment other than climbing gear was minimal, but we managed to work up an impressive sweat. Following a typically stunning sunset, we had a quickly-prepared supper, which was followed by a gear-organising session under a seemingly inquisitive moon.

We settled down fairly early and, after a brief skirmish with a Rastus on reconnaissance, got to sleep in a hut which would have been pushed to sleep another person.

That dreaded drone of an alarm clock woke us at 05h30, and by 06h30 we were departing Middle Hut with packs filled largely with water and climbing gear - most of our other gear was left at Middle Hut.

The walk-in was, apart from two hours long, extremely difficult due to the terrain. Pine hacks move over ! An accurate description would be too long to include, but anyone wishing to do the route can feel free to speak to either of us.

Our planned starting point was the far right of the obvious frontal face. Although not the most direct route, it was chosen because we wanted to gain altitude easily, fearing a loong day.

In retrospect, this predisposition lost us much of the climb's glory. If you are prepared to climb long, hard and fast, it would definitely be worth following the cliffs from fairly early on.

We weren't able to get as high as expected, and eventually had to start from a rather undesirable place. The first pitch was ugly and difficult, getting us out of a mild fix. 45m with 20m F2. This was followed by 50m C/D scrambling to where the real stuff started.

The third and fourth pitches were both 50m, sharing 40 m of truly amazing 5-star F2 climbing.

In the chill of the early morning shadow, everything seemed so vibrant. As our speed of movement slowed, the shrill echoes of bird calls lulled the subconscious as every move was slowly considered.

This was followed by 65m of B/C scrambling up a gully, whereupon we found our first beacon. They are discretely placed at obvious belay stances, not to mark the route, but rather just to give assurance that you are on a route which has been successfully completed before.

After 40 m of the best D I have ever climbed, we were one pitch away from the planned lunch stop, half an hour ahead of schedule. The standard approach was obvious, but, having had it easy for quite a while now, we decided to take a less obvious detour onto the skyline. This proved fun., however, the rock was untouched, and far from pristine. This pitch was mine, and gardening on the way up was interesting, with every chunk removed flying several hundred metres vertically before making contact with terra firma once again.

We reached our lunch spot at 14h00, and it took very little persuasion to take a break. While lunching, we peered up to the next pitch; this was the one which we had estimated would be the crux.

The ridge had narrowed to 5m wide here, and while alternate, easier access was available further to our right, as Bert had done. We were determined to take the more direct route this time. Above us was a large pillar of smooth granite, slightly angled, with a large crack stretching up the centre, half a ledge some way up, and terminating in a mild overhang. Our hands sweated in anticipation. It was with both sorrow and anger that, after lunch, we poured out 3l of water carried unnecessarily. The 7 litres we carried between us was not over-budgeting, though. I would suggest, especially on a hot summers' day, carrying this much. However, drink as much as possible before beginning the climb, and carry 5l up with you after the walk-in.

After lunch (15h00), Carel was lucky enough to lead this pitch. It turned out easier to climb just on either side of the crack, first on the left, and then on the right, then use the crack as such. The pitch was made accessible by a small pocket seemingly lost among the smooth faces just before the overhang, and we judged the pitch to go at F2/F3 (30m).

From here on in, we had another, easier pitch on a continuation of the good rock of the pillar (40m F1). After that, a tapering gradient led us to believe that we were close to the summit. Unfortunately not. We were surprised by another relatively strenuous pitch (40m, 20m F1), and a full

pitch of scrambling before we untied (for the first time in over 9 hours). Ten minutes of B grade scrambling ended abruptly, pleasantly and unexpectedly at the summit beacon at 18h20. A quick, brief note dropped into the summit bottle, and we were on our way to Hoare, floating on adrenaline, body reserves and God knows what else. We were too tired to appreciate what was probably an awesome sunset from the top of the ridge leading to Point Hi. By the time we got to Pell's, it was dark, and the final section to Hoare was completed in a soft moonlight which seemed to be illuminating all of the Hex for our private viewing.

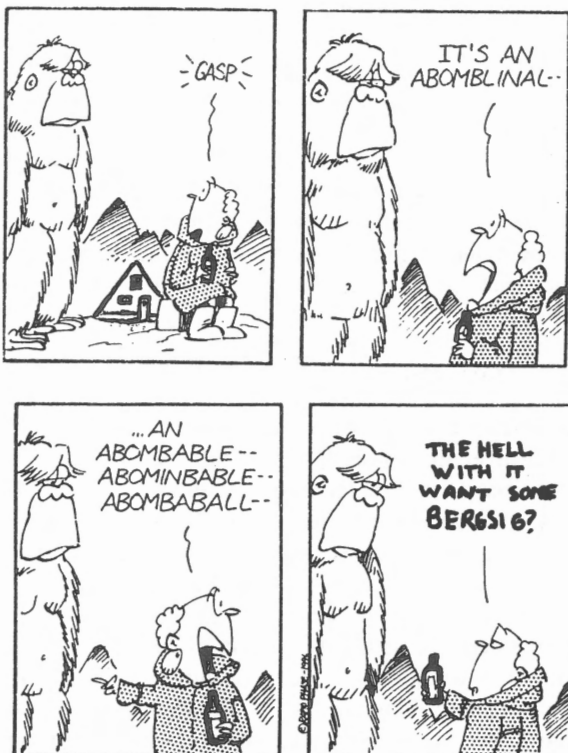
We reached Hoare at 19h30 drained, and threw together some pasta before collapsing into the sleeping bags up there.

Luckily there was very little to clean up in the hut (those of you lucky enough to have been to the hut often will know the schlep of cleaning up). We relaxed the early stages of the morning away, and then descended to Middle Hut, to collect the garb left there, before dropping down to the cars and heading back to Cape Town.

This has to be the ultimate way to get to Hoare Hut - 11 hours and 12 pitches from Middle Hut !

A more accurate route description is available in the Hoare Hut logbook, and anyone wishing to repeat the route can feel free to discuss it with either myself or Carel.

*David Acott*



## THREE DAYS ON THE DESERT COAST

Once upon a time, not so long ago, five young men arrived in a town. The town was a delightful one, full of what writers would call "old world charm". It appealed to the young travelers immediately, providing a welcome respite after a long sojourn in the desert. It seemed to have the same attraction to other young people who provided a buzz of gaiety and carefreeness which permeated the normally quiet seaside hamlet.

"I would like a shower," said the leader, a tall bronzed fellow whose flowing locks were begrimed with dust and sweat.

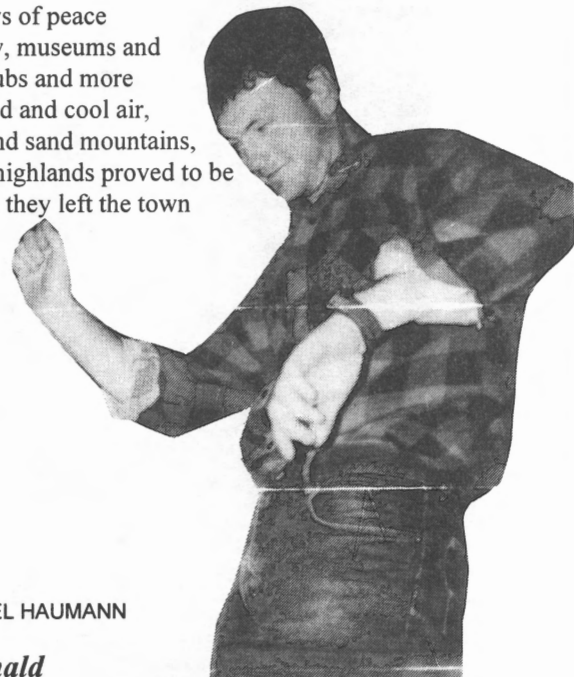
"I've reached the itchy stage," proclaimed the engineer, feverishly scratching his darkened jowls.

The third man, a studious looking gentleman underneath his stubble, announced, "There's going to be a bit of a party, with a bit of eating and drinking on the side."

The irrepressible, free spirit disappeared but materialised later. "I've phoned my friends and written postcards. You must see the main street and foreshore and this junk shop on the corner. I've walked to the end of the pier and back and been to see the museum. "I've ....

The fifth young man just smiled and said nothing

After three days of peace and tranquillity, museums and art galleries, pubs and more pubs, fresh food and cool air, desert plants and sand mountains, the call of the highlands proved to be too strong and they left the town revitalised and the better off for their presence.



LEADER : CAREL HAUMANN

*Ross McDonald*

PHOTO : IANNI VAMVADELIS

# Namib Naukluft

*Specifics: 120 km in 7/8 days*

*Average Temperature: pretty damn hot*

## **Day 1: Hiker's Haven to Putte Shelter (14km)**

We left Hiker's Haven hut at about 8:40am and headed south down a dry riverbed and then out right, and up and over to Fonteinkloof where we had lunch. After Heartbreak Pass we found a zebra carcass on the Zebra highway heading up the escarpment slopes. That night at Putte Shelter we talked till late, sitting in the full moonlight and plummeting night temperatures, sharing chocolate, instant pudding and jelly (which set while we chatted) - thanks to Adrienne.

## **Day 2: Putte Shelter to Ubusis Hut (15km)**

The morning's walk is fast along a good jeep track and we were pushed by a strong tailwind. We had tea in another dry riverbed near a good rock crag, side-wall type thing. After a bit of a workout we headed on to lunch at Bergpos. This old, dry windmill and reservoir served as a windshelter.



PHOTO : IANNI VAMVADELIS

The afternoon is much slower as you descend sharply down the Ubusis kloof. We had to negotiate some high, chained waterfall descents before the river eventually flattened out to the Ubusis Hut. This was an old holiday house and is quite luxurious. The slope was covered in quiver trees and noisy baboons that shut up after nightfall. That night we were exhausted, but the keen played cards in candlelight.

## **Day 3: Ubusis Hut to Alderhorst Shelter (12km)**

We rested well and made good progress back up the beautiful kloof, taking time to admire the lush vegetation, sheer sides and the harshness of the terrain. Our lunch in the Bergpos reservoir was interrupted by another party of hikers led by a ragged fellow named 'Bakkies'. After exchanging experiences, we moved north along the kudu plains to Alderhorst shelter. This shelter is placed in the worst possible place for a windshelter. The wind absolutely howled all day and night. We spent the afternoon working out on the water pump, climbing on the shelter and lazing in the sun on the downwind side of the shelter. Carel organised a cooking crew and they struggled to get done in the wind. James and Steve made instant pudding again, and we all ate supper in our sleeping bags. The temperatures really drop sharply after the sun sets and the wind did not let up.

## **Day 4: Alderhorst Shelter to Tsams Ost Shelter (17km)**

The next day passes the 4-day Naukluft turn-off and then winds down the Zebra kloof. In another dry riverbed that is very expansive, Ross and Steve found some good bouldering on the large rocks. After that we climbed out of the valley to traverse around a large waterfall. Axel managed to get crushed by a rock and rolled through a cactus. After some patching he was blitzing away again and we descended a tricky bit to the riverbed again. We had lunch at a trickling fountain before reaching Tsams Ost. The water pump here was broken and we took turns at hauling buckets of water out of a well for drinking and washing.

## **Day 5: Tsams Ost Shelter to Die Valle Shelter (17km)**

Today started with the women leading up Broekskeur pass and then over Euphorbia kloof. After that we accidentally crushed many very ugly, large, squishable beetles that littered the Quivertree ridge. We had tea just after Fonteinpomp (another dry windmill) and had a rock tossing contest. The trail then crosses the huge expanses of the Melkbos plains. The space here is a bit unnerving after days in steep sided riverbeds. Absolutely awesome. I climbed the only tree on this huge plain. (a quiver tree of course) The surrounding mountains show excellent rock-climbing potential, but accessibility will be a challenge of note. Axel and Thomas had a very wet experience with the water trailer at Die Valle shelter.





Some of us walked / ran up the valley to Die Valle waterfall for an evening wash in the splash pool, but we were disappointed to find it dry.

#### **Day 6: Die Valle Shelter to Tufa Shelter (16km)**

Another steep ascent, Groot Hartseer, led up to the top of the waterfall. There were some very cold pools here, and Carel, Ross, Karen and I swam willingly. The view from the top of this huge 200+m waterfall is incredible. The coastal dunes were only just visible on the horizon, thanks to Ross's binocs. From here the trail passes some Tufa caves and a very large fig tree before it winds up a long quartz valley. We had a long resting lunch in some shade and then began the long descent to Tufa Shelter. That night we discussed how we were feeling and planned to complete day 7 and 8 on one day. We packed up and turned in early.

#### **Day 7: Tufa Shelter to Hiker's Haven (14km + 16km)**

We woke up at 5am and hit the trail by 6am. We had to ascend up onto the plateau again. The trail led us up a valley, over very large boulders and a 28m chain. After some more steep walking we reached World's View. Here you can look north towards Maltahoe, where a road is a definite break in the isolation. We made brisk progress along the edge to Bakenkop (the highest point on the trail) for a group photo. We paced along a jeep track across the Kapokvlakte, past some dry waterholes. At the Kapokvlakte shelter where we had an early lunch (about 11am).

The bulk of the afternoon was spent bouldering across the Neverending Hills. The name is a serious understatement. This is torturous terrain for the weary and it is really, really long. Axel, James, Steve, Ross and myself spotted three Mountain Zebra! At last! They were beautiful but nervous, and after trying to sniff us, dashed away into the neverending hills. Soon we could recognise the incredible surrounding scenery to the south from our drive in to the park. We hastened down a long winding descent to the Naukluft riverbed. Here we regrouped and swam in a very welcome pool. The Hiker's haven was about 45min away, and we only just made it in by early evening dusk. I took time to swim at the Tufa Falls. The water here is flowing and very refreshing. We were very pleased to get to cars and a good meal. That evening we shared feelings and impressions listed below....

#### **Personal Expressions**

From that weary, relieved evening scribbled on paper in the gas lamp light.

NAHMEEB!!! BRRRP!! WHOO HOOO!!! DING! DING! The strange foreign calls of the white-clad Dane echoed again and again across the plains, ringing through the kloofs. The baboons answered back - their barks hanging in the still air.



PHOTO : IANNI VAMVADELIS

*Ten Capetonians* - five rain-sodden, five sun-tanned - reveled in bright Namibian sun. They strode out across the sun - bleached grassy valleys in search of a testing adventure and relaxing companionship. They found it. A week of blue skies, limestone and dusty desert scrub provided the ultimate backdrop for an unforgettable experience that must surely be a welcome change to the mountains of the Western Cape.

*Namib* - this trail was the hardest and most advanced I've ever seen. However, it was a fantastic experience! One could get a pretty good idea of the nature in 4 days, while the last 3 days test your fitness. I'll never forget this week in the desert with the crazy South Africans and GB. This trial is highly recommended.

Sleeping without a hut, walking without a path, living without a future - is this it? This trail manages to precipitate out a lot of incredible fun, it is long enough, flat enough, steep enough (!), chained enough, to rock the victim. Just Do It!

*Rugged* - underfoot, plants (thorns), tree roots searching for water. Chain! - awesome. Flowers, Wind, Pasta. Riverbeds crying for water....Dripping nose. Rock, fig trees, living gorges, blisters on top of blisters, snoring, burping, fainting, crude joke-telling men (savages!)

*1st day - 6th day:* Long gorges and kloofs  
Last day: rocks, rocks and more rocks! Were is the f\*\*\*ing path! The zebras saved the day however!

LEADER : CAREL HAUMANN

*Ianni Vamvadelis*

## GROSSE SPITZKOPPE - THE DESERT TOWER

*The ascent of the Spitzkoppe formed part of a composite climbing - hiking trip which included the Naukluft Hiking Trail.*

Spitzkoppe, as a "climber's" mountain has intrigued me since I first read about it. At 1850m its' sun-tortured orange granite soars about 600 metres above the never-ending desert plain. Now that we were finally established in our camp on the slopes, I realised what all the excitement had been about: it was simply incredibly beautiful.

Besides the main Spitzkoppe tower, there are numerous other satellite granite domes scattered about, and it is on one of them, the Sugarloaf, that we decided to have our warm-up climb before tackling Spitzkoppe proper.

Desert Rose, as the route is known, weighs in at an apparently moderate grade of 13/F1. It fractions its way up 7 full pitches of 45 degree slab with semi-hanging bolt belay stances. With the only runner on the whole 300m route being a bolt on the first pitch, the leading is, to say the least, freaky. As we were soon to discover, this theme of lead-outs and consequent fears of existential demise was a recurring one. I recall being about two thirds of the way up the second pitch, desperately scanning the endless sea of granite for the next bolt belay stance, when I suddenly realised what would happen if I did, for some obscure reason, manage to fall: I would cheese-grate & body / corpse smear for about 60 metres down this most scenic slab! There was no psyche-protection to place, no jug to grab, far down below was Ianni at the 1st belay, even further down was the Ross-Steven-James trio starting up the 1st pitch, but at this particular point in space and time there was only the slab (which was, in fact, steepening) and me. My adrenaline levels were rising, I was solidly gripped and nearing "freaked" status: it was time for some serious self-psychology. Eventually I came up with some ridiculous argument about all people having to die at some stage in their lives. I climbed on, pouring chalk onto entities that are best described as being "anti-grips". Luckily the angle eased slightly, I spotted the belay stance, and at approximately 47 metres, with a sigh of utter relief, I clipped into the stance (potential fall before clip-in: 94 metres).

After that easier climbing led onto a nice summit, although a sixty metre pitch (the 5th) forced us into a short double man solo (no runners). Granted: this route is potentially hazardous to one's health. It is also damn scary. However, in the light of our poor post-exam physical state, this might have been a subjective experience, and because of the exquisitely aesthetic slab climbing that it offers, it is still highly recommended. Simply remember: the leader **NEVER** falls (especially not on 13's).

After experiencing the wonders of Desert Rose, it was time for the Grosse Spitzkoppe. The normal route (which is the easier route to the summit) follows an ingenious route comprising three stages: a classically steep walk-in, followed by some rather interesting scrambling, occasionally requiring a rope up, which culminates in a grunt-inducing "11 inch crack" squeeze (reminiscent of the Table Mountain Kloof Corner pitch) through a pitch dark chamber. To get to the start of the final climbing stage one has to abseil 15 metres onto a ledge which allows a walk-across to the start of the first pitch.

The first pitch was memorable both from a historical and a personal point of view. The grade is states simply as 'F'. It follows a 50-60 degree slab of reasonably bad rock for 20 metres to reach a wide ledge. On this pitch the opening ascensionists in the 1940's committed the original sin of hacking steps into the rock - given the bad rock, this was justified and necessary. A piton and a good bolt protects the undercut start, after that there is, characteristically, no gear. Protected by the bolt, I pulled onto the slab. As I was just about established, the crucial grip broke. I took a one metre sport-climbing type fall. To my surprise, the bolt did not pop and Ianni did well to hold his first leader fall. On my second attempt the bolt and peg served as fine hand holds. Four pleasant and at times intricate E-F1 pitches (which included cracks, laybacks and slabs) were followed by a ghastly chimney where rolling of the shoulders and chest movements were necessary for upward progress to be made - this is graded as 'D', but felt like 'G'.

One final slab, and at 2pm on 4 July 1997 the glorious and unforgettable 10m x 10m summit was ours - the 302nd party to have made the ascent.

*Carel Haumann*



PHOTO : STEVE HANCOCK

## COLORADO MOUNTAIN STATE, U S A



JOE MACLENNAN LEADING IN ELDORADO CANYON

If you like mountains, then you will like Colorado!

I was there, at Colorado State University (CSU) doing Organometallic Chemistry research for the second half of 1996. CSU is in the small University town of Fort Collins which is 55 miles north of Denver, a mere one hour's drive on Interstate I25.

Colorado is truly a mountain state with 52 peaks over 14 000 ft high - one for every week of the year!



ROCKY MOUNTAIN NATIONAL PARK : JOHN AND DAVE MACLENNAN  
TAKING A BREAK



HEADING FOR THE SUMMIT OF FLAT-TOP PEAK IN COLORADO  
ROCKY MOUNTAIN PARK NEAR THE GREAT DIVIDE

If you did them all in one year (or even 10 years) you would be in line to join a prestigious club of those who have climbed all the 14 thousanders.

Colorado has all kinds of climbing available. There is high mountain alpine climbing, like the Diamond on Long's Peak, during the short summer season of July and August. There is rock and sport climbing in over a wide range of crags and rock faces for the warmer six months of the year, as in Eldorado Canyon, near Boulder, (*as shown in photo 1*), where many traditional and sports climbs of all grades and lengths are waiting, and with easy access.

As winter approaches, the high mountains soon become out of condition for the hard, and steep rock faces, but hiking up the big peaks, like those in Rocky Mountain National Park, is still possible well into the winter months, as long as you have snow shoes or alpine skis and avalanche beacons with you (*see photo 2*) !

Reaching the top of Flat-Top Neck (ca. 12 500 ft) (*see photo 3*) in early winter - you have to be careful of the short days and extremely low temperatures as soon as the sun goes down over the horizon.

And when the high mountain season is over for hiking and climbing, then it is the ski season and Colorado boasts more ski resorts than anywhere else in the USA. It is a skier's paradise! The ski season starts in October and can run right through to May with twelve feet of snow not being uncommon in some resorts - and when that lot melts, there is some of the most magnificent white water rafting that you could ever possibly imagine !!

*John Moss*



# Devil's Peak Ice Cream Challenge

The 1997 Devil's Peak Ice Cream Challenge was met by a group of 20 hikers, with at least one highly corruptible judge in their midst.

On Sunday morning, the whole city was shrouded in a blanket of mist, which was just starting to lift at 8:30. By 9:00am, most of Devil's Peak was visible from Rhodes Memorial, and more people were arriving, some of them with unusually large packs (for a day hike) with accessories strapped to them.

At 9:15am, we finally set off, Pierre having persuaded me that a deck chair was an absolutely vital piece of equipment, and that no trend-setting judge should be without one.

We proceeded up to the Kings Blockhouse, and from there up to the lookout hut. After a short rest, we proceeded along The Knife Edge, with its' spectacular drop off on the left hand side. From there it was down again, and along the upper traverse round the back of the peak through some rather dense fynbos. Upon arriving at the peak, I was greeted by the sight of Phil's gas cooker already heating up the chocolate sauce, and Dave changing into his tuxedo.

After registering, the contestants presented their ice creams to the judges. After sampling the delights, marks were awarded in the categories for consistency, presentation/taste and originality/effort. The judges' decision was final, and no correspondence was entered into!

Well done to Dave Acott who won the competition, and to



PHOTO : WARREN HURD

Phil Ginsberg and James Taylor who come second with their joint entry, and also to all who entered.

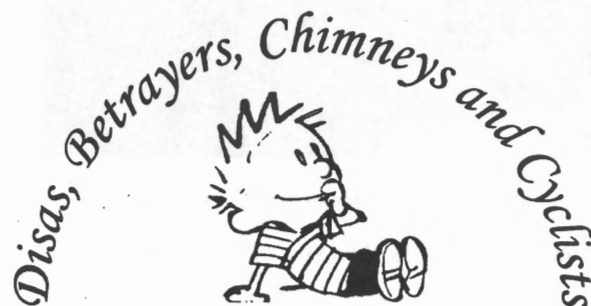
After enjoying the view for a while longer, and just generally taking it easy, it was time to head back down via Newland's Ravine.

Thanks to all those who came along and who contributed towards making the '97 Ice Cream Challenge an enjoyable experience.

JUDGE : WARREN HURD

HONORARY JUDGE : PIERRE HOFFA (BY HIS REQUEST)

*Warren Hurd*



The customary meeting at the information centre merged into a car snake, winding its way under a raging torrent of cyclists near Victoria hospital. Hunters' way became overpopulated with cars and the enthusiastic group set off as the day became clear and cloudless. Myburgh's Waterfall Ravine was ascended and included several delights like the red *Disa Uniflora* impressive, imposing vertical rockwalls, incessant sombre bulbuls, iridescent sunbirds and imaginative conversations.

Rock scrambling "now that was Adventure" of the B grade on wet slabs yielded the top. Judas Peak saw lunch and heard a whole series of profanities uttered from Maria and Emma's mouths (because of a small rock chimney - easy really!)

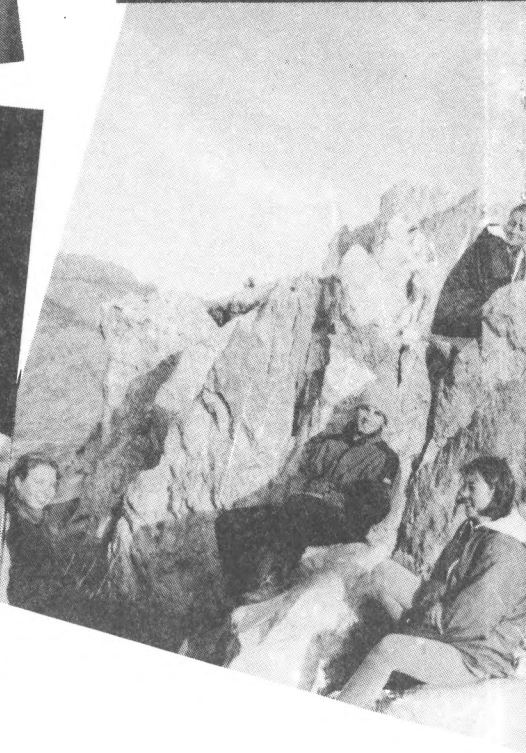
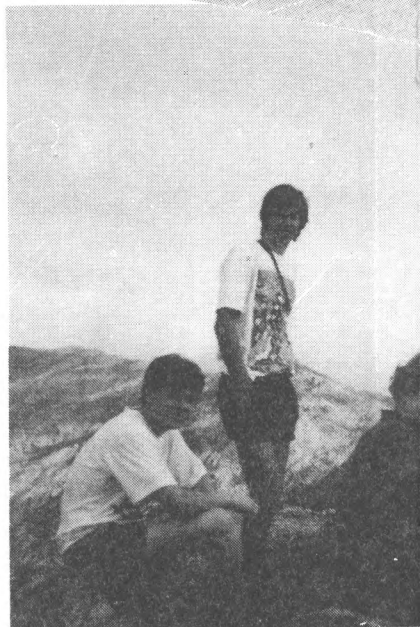
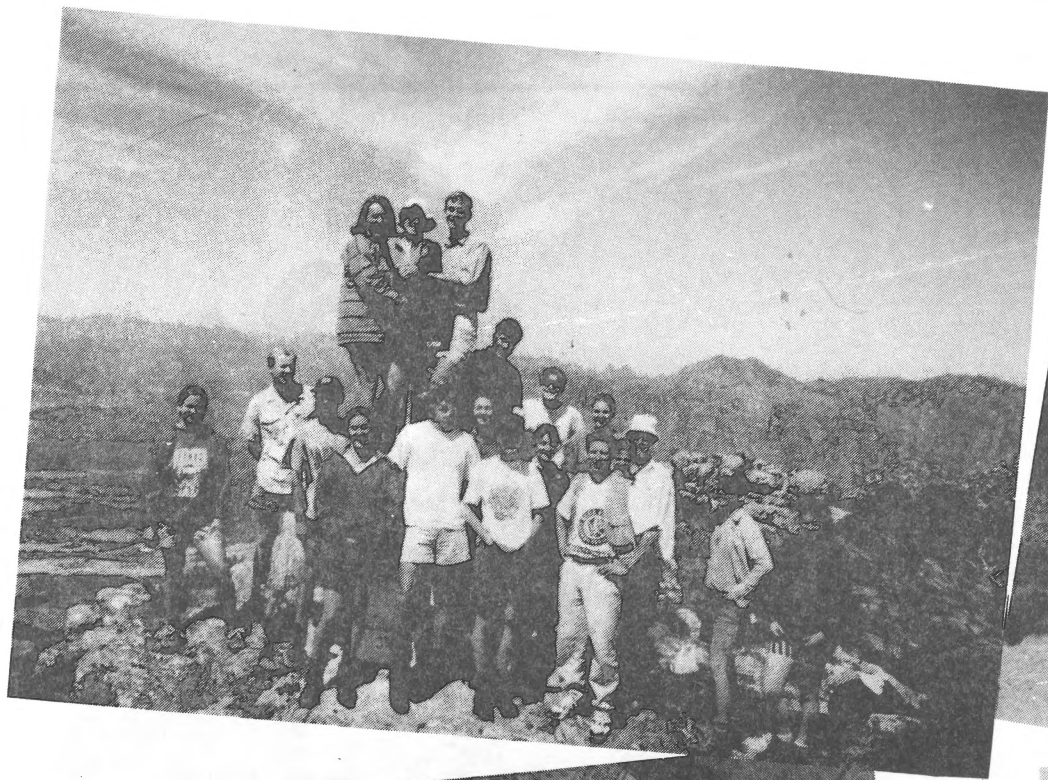
The descent via Llandudno Ravine and Hout Bay corner was accompanied by good music from the Suikerbossie stands of the Argues Cycle Tour. A mad chairman with walls facing in all directions on different parts of the globe swept the tail as the final hurdle - a flat (yet full of scratchy bushes) contour path led to a bushwhack before the welcoming sight of the cars. Well done to all, and thanks for a memorable hike.

THE RIGHT HONORABLE  
*Foak Warwick Board*

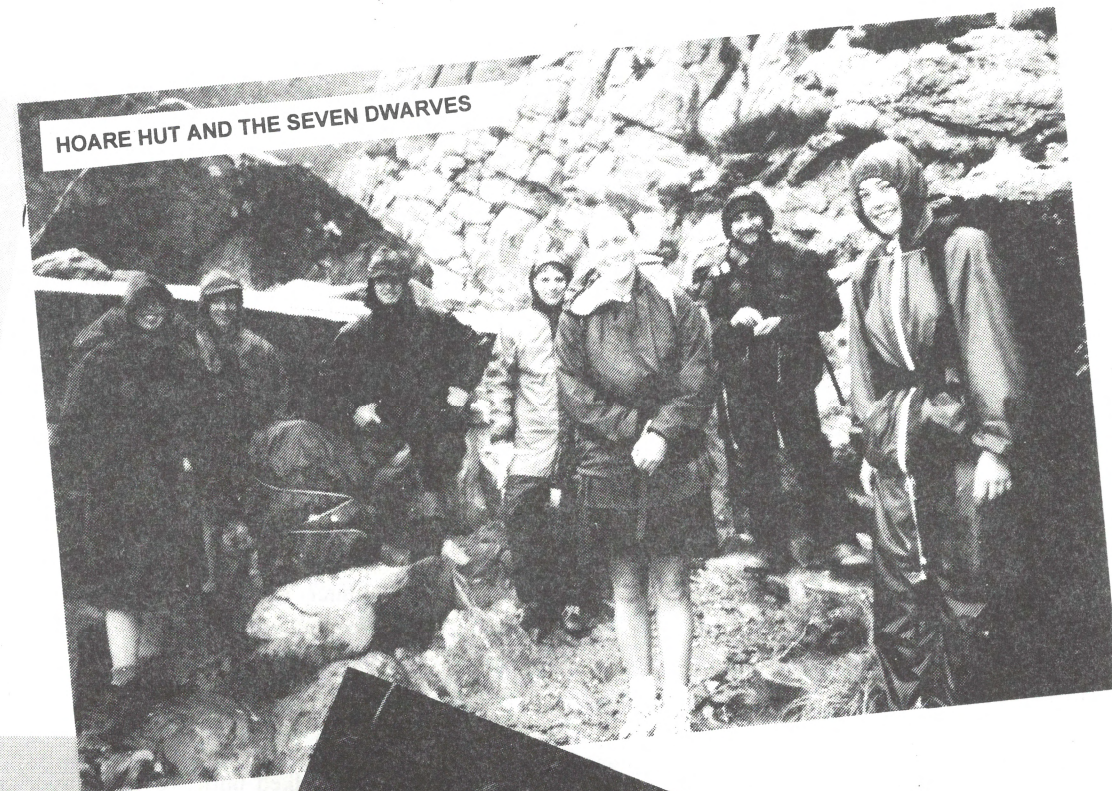
# Gallery





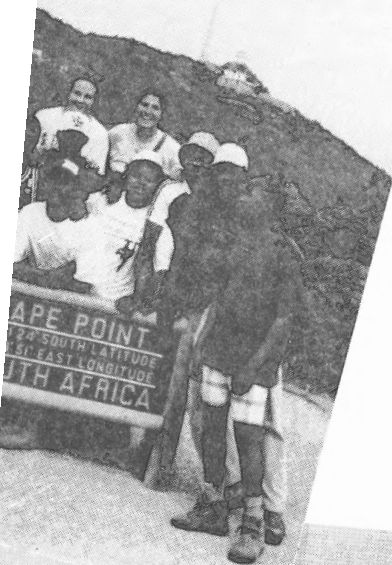








HOARE HUT AND THE SEVEN DWARVES



Okay, so the SANDF are going to drop us off somewhere in the Hex to cut pines for the annual heli-hack. But where exactly is best ? where exactly are the pines ?

Well, no one really knows. So for this reason, Alan Matthews, James Taylor and I decided to go for a long walk to all the possible landing spots, to determine which was most preferable.

Leaving Cape Town just before 16h00 on a Friday, we were at Hoare Hut by 20h00. Alan set a very fast pace out of Base Hut, and it just never really dropped - 2 hours to Hoare from Base Hut !

Setting the alarm for 03h30, we settled down to sleep at 22h00, only to be awoken at 00h30 by some MCSA members on an MCSA meet. Well, no need to cancel (yet).

We dragged ourselves out of our sleeping bags in a groggy state of semi-consciousness in the early hours of the morning. Our plan was essentially to go to Mitchell's Peak, down to the Witels cliffs, cross Delville Kloof and back up via Tarantula to Hoare - in an estimated 16 hours.

We got out of the hut at 04h15, and were at Tarantula neck before it began to get light; viewed sunrise from Pic Delville, and had breakfast on Mitchell's just after 09h00 (having ringbarked some mammoth trees en route). In the summit bottle was an entry from 1971 (referring to Hoare Hut as Long Gully Hut!) where the participants were proud to get to Mitchell's by midday. Hmmm.

Perfectly on schedule, we departed to observe the slopes of Mitchell's before making our way (via the both heli-hack campsites) to the intersection of Delville Kloof and the Witels, where we planned to cross Delville Kloof. En route, we stumbled across a small valley crowded with protea trees in bloom, and birds all about. Sights like these make pine hacking all the more worthwhile.

We arrived at Delville Kloof at 13h00 precisely - still on schedule, but from here on things turned for the worse: try as hard as we could, we couldn't find any feasible (safe) route down into the Witels, or Delville Kloof. Below us the green Witels waters gurgled, and opposite us an easy exit to the slopes of Tarantula was tantalisingly close, but after an hour of searching we decided on the safest option available: to back-track to Hoare Hut (after already walking for 11 hours!)

At 15h00, after lunch, we set out on our daunting trip, our most pressing issue being the lack of water. Although the slopes of Mitchell's are incredibly dry, some underground water was found amongst some reeds.

We reached Mitchell's Peak at 18h00, just in time for sunset. Waaihoek peak was visible, seeming so close one could almost imagine people enjoying sundowners - and yet it was so far away.

We managed to get onto Mitchell's Baby before total darkness engulfed us, and promptly decided to have some dinner (we were rationing ourselves) before sleeping. Without any sleeping bags or gopher pads, we all woke up at roughly the same time due to piercing cold. It was two hours' testing walking before the moon rose splendidly over Matroosberg. Minds were totally focused on the task at hand: reaching Hoare Hut timeously and safely, and so we walked until we were tired, and rested until we were cold. Fatigue distracted us from what were probably stunning views, but eventually we stumbled into Hoare Hut at 05h00 - close on 25 hours after leaving!

Moral of the story: the kloofs on Zuurberg are largely (but not totally) uncrossable.

David Acott

ARTIST AND WRITER: DUCK EDWING



# FREEDOM DAY WEEKEND

it's days like these...

The trip to Groot, Middle and Klein Krakadouw over the Freedom Day long week-end will go down as those never-to-be-forgotten experiences. Looking back in future years it will be remembered as the time we did the three peaks in a day.

Friday evening was spent in Clanwilliam and after being ushered from the hotel bar at 10pm we settled down to a good night sleep.

Saturday dawned cool and overcast and when we arrived at Dwarsrivier farm the peaks were obscured in thick cloud. Leaving the cars we set about tackling the 11km Krakadouw-pass. We made good time up a little used path, often through indigenous forest. Lunch at Krakadouwpoort with the arid openness of the Karoo in front of us provided a welcome respite. A short sharp walk took us to our campsite next to one of the east grooves of Cedar trees in the Cederberg range. A quick wash in frigid water and the ever important supper preparation saw the sun disappear behind the next day's adventure. As sleep called our weary legs to cosy sleeping bags, I thought, "It's days like these..."

Up at 6am with the three-quarter moon still casting shadows and an icy wind blowing down from the mountains. After a pollution-free sunrise it was a quick blitz up the steep Moedersielshoek and the cloud enshrouded summit plateau of Groot Krakadouw. Down through the Kvoukelspleet and into Long street, emerging out of Lydia se toneel. A boulder across to the Sealion and a consultation with the Rock Inspector led us to the south beacon at 1745m. A run across to the west beacon and the three chickens saw us entering the maze to the head of the abseils. After descending through swiveling mist, a double-time march took us to the saddle between Groot and Middle Krakadouw. A half-hour sorte to the cairn on Middle saw us signing the summit register and then quickly descending to a place out of the wind. Two down with one to go. A snap decision and we're off to Klein, whooping and whistling across the summit plateaus. Down into the valley with three possible summits. Which one is it? What the heck, let's do them all. Lightning quick, up-down, up-down. Just enough time for a summit photo and a bite to eat. Back across the rocky ridge in time to see the sunset, but rats, we missed our spaceship! It's getting dark now and the pace increases down towards the grassy vlakke and some hot tea. We trotted back into camp at 7:30pm and soon the stoves were doing their duty. Lying under the Milky Way, the wind died, and the body finally relaxed. "Aaah! It's day's like these".

A sleep-in on Monday morning allowed everyone to rearrange themselves. A chilly, southerly wind soon woke everyone up and now with lightened packs we walked back

to Krakadouwpoort and the - challenge of an icy swim and Pete's attempt at three Provita's in a minute. After a much needed lunch and a warmer swim we arrived back at the car at 15h30. Another perfect day in the Cederberg, warm, no clouds, no wind, and an uninterrupted view of the three summits, towering walls and all. We had come a full circle and work done equals zero. Yeah right!

It's days like these....

*Ross McDonald*

## NOTES

Tents definitely needed at this time of the year as well as warm clothing. A minimum of three days needed, preferably more to do a longer circuit. Ropes and harnesses for the abseils. Length of walk ca 35km over very steep, rough ground but note sever. Knowledge of the area definitely needed.

Any questions don't hesitate to contact our very own mountain man Ross.



PHOTO : JAMES CULLIS

# The Swellendam Trail

As our intrepid crew (2 Germans, 1 American, 1 Spaniard, 1 Icelandic and even a few local South Africans) headed out from the starting point there were none but a few Witels clouds hanging around.

The first very brief day is a misleadingly flat introduction to what is at times a fairly rolling landscape for hiking. To describe each day in detail would take too long and probably involve way too much nostalgia. Instead I would like to mention some of the more general highlights we experienced.

Lengthy fireside chats, with occasional bursts of anything from *Gershwin* to *Will Smith* from our traveling *Maria Carry aka Abi Basch* made for extremely pleasant evenings and solidly slept nights. Acts of "Cruelty to Marshmallows" and Theo's experiments on custard powder were endured for the higher purpose of a decent dessert, while tequila was found to be great while sitting down but not too good for toiling up the next day's hills. NB: Game powder is nothing at all like salt for tequila slammers....

Only one day was cursed with a precipitous presence and as we all stopped to appreciate what was rumoured to be the best vista of the hike we noted for future reference that extremely thick mists with irritating winds do nothing to improve the view. However, considering the number of magical little forests and cool/chilly/damn cold streams we had, our private paradise in the hills was still a beauty to behold. After day 2 though, the weather was sent express from Hades to us with a hot sun beating down. Although much better than rain, lots of water should be carried at all times.

The area around Swellendam is noted for its spectacular fynbos features. This reputation is well deserved, as the walk through Proteavallei is a fantastical experience in natural colour and beauty, with proteas, ericas, disas and other funny named plants in abundance. This valley alone makes the hike worthwhile and photo opportunities abound for the happy snappers.

Eager bouldering types will rejoice in the number of short power routes available to keep idle hands out of mischief.

Gamblers anonymous lost several members as we indulged in some serious card games at night; the rules being explained in any one of our 10 official hike languages.

I believe there is still debate as to whether we were all playing the same game half the time, but since victory was evenly spread, no one seemed to mind.

A number of spectacular waterfalls are available for those with a head for heights. Exploring off the path is encouraged as some of the most amazing little spots are hidden from view and a little extra effort will be well rewarded.

I would be exaggerating if I said this hike was a walk in the park. There is one pretty long day, and there are no shortages of inclines for the Energiser bunnies among us to blaze ahead on. It is still not beyond any average hikers ability. Given enough fitness to wander around Table Mountain for a day, you should be able to take your time there and have no problems.

As always, there is a single element that will make or break a hike. Good company. This hike had it in spades and we never ran short of stories, riddles or songs to keep a good vibe going.

In short, thanks guys for an amazing hike.

## Tips for future Swellendammers :

- *Shade is fairly rare on some days. Pick your lunch spots with this in mind.*
- *The map is very good in all respects except gradient...Theo still has some expletives reserved for the cartographers, should they ever meet.*
- *Winter nights here are cold; take a decent sleeping bag.*
- *None of the days require extreme speed. Take time out to indulge in any particularly pretty spots you come across, after all, you can never have too much tea, eh James ?*

LEADER : RAY GREENWOOD

*Ray Greenwood*



PHOTO : JAMES CULLIS



Orientation week started off with a KABOOM this year owing to the amazing enthusiasm and interest of our members, and one of our very first hikes, Sundowners on Big Lion's Head, attracted a considerable multi-cultural hoard of smiley faces. Caryn gave up count after 40 and just prayed that the number coming down equaled or bettered that going up! The 40+ were not daunted by slightly cloudy conditions... No siree, they were keen beans who were determined to witness the now-here-now-gone setting of the sun at all costs. (It was a tad chilly).

Being so close to home, people were able to come and go as they pleased and considering that Caryn hasn't been called in for questioning by the police or parents regarding the whereabouts of various members as yet, she is assuming that the age-old theory of : "What goes up must come down!" still applies!! She thanks all participants for not getting permanently lost, hijacked or terminally injured.

Having survived her first hike for '97 as a leader, Caryn volunteered to lead a 15km hike situated in the Mont Rochelle Nature Reserve in Franschoek. It was an absolutely spectacular day and people made an excellent attempt to catch the 8am vine!! Fortunately the 14 members were completely versatile as the day's plans changed continuously and spontaneously.

The Plan was to walk to Observation Point which provides superb views over the Wemmershoek Dam and then continue onwards and upwards to Perdekop. But what actually happened is that 2 members, deep in conversation, turned left at the fork and embarked upon climbing up Du Toit's Kop whereas the rest of the fit and ENTHUSIASTIC bunch had gone on their merry right way!!

When the leader became aware of her missing troops, she raced off to find them at the top of the aforesaid mountain, unfortunately twisting her ankle in the process.

Once they had joined the rest at Observation Point, the 2 sheep were tired but the other 11 had obviously been indulging in Bioplus and were raring to go and bag any and all peaks in the surrounding area. So having left the 2 wary members at the car park, the turbo-charged troop members

raced up Du Toit's Kop and marveled at the beauty of the Franschoek basin. Alan then asked on behalf of the eager beavers if we couldn't quickly bag the next 2 peaks further on. At this stage Dawn and Kevin decided to give that idea a skip and 10 of us zooted off to the second peak and ate our munchies. Alan then asked if we couldn't please go and climb the 3<sup>rd</sup> peak seeing as we were neeeaaarly there. Caryn was most impressed at the enthusiasm and ambition (although STILL convinced that either the Bioplus has been doing the rounds again or that the pretzels/ fruit roll contained some illegal ingredient) but, unfortunately as much as she would have LOVED to carry on, she had 5 members who were sufficiently satisfied with what they had achieved.

A compromise was reached whereby a carload would carry on, led by smooth-talking (!) Alan while the rest began the descent. In all, it was quite the exciting day for Caryn as a leader, seeing as nothing went according to plan but it was a most enjoyable, beautiful & challenging hike made great by the smiley, get-up-and-go bunch which included yet another American (we love you guys!), apparently going by the name of "Bob", who let slip that he is involved in espionage. Go Bob! Me thinketh it's time to think about a change in career before you get caught!!!

LEADER : CARYN MAXWELL

*Caryn Maxwell*

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## TRANQUILITY CRACKS

Sunday the 21<sup>st</sup> September we left from Rontree S(upslope from Bakoven for those who are as directionless as I am) and followed the pipe to Corridor Ravine. From a chilly hike in the windy shadow of Corridor we entered the "awesome beauty" (right on, Rebecca) of the Cracks at Slangolie Butress. What a feeling! To walk into the total calm of these fissures and exit into a sunlit glen with quite the most fabulous view [sorry, got a little lyrical there.] Seriously, it's rather nice.

Rebecca's chocolate brownies went down a treat, as did the conversation about British game-shows. Kath-the-artist painted a really nifty water-colour (in which Ross, Steve and I appear as part of the scenery - Oh immortalized fame!)

Yup, definitely a top spot to visit on our magnificent piece of furniture - Rebecca was right, tranquil heaven it is. And the decent to earth via Woody Ravine isn't half bad either.

LEADER : REBECCA GRAY

*Tansy Horwood*





## The Dirty Dozen (and a Half)

After a joint decision to take the "easy" route up to the caves (no hard-core hikers here thankfully), 20 eager would-be cavers left UCT and we made our way down to Silvermine. A 1½ hour walk (negotiating a few hills in between) took us to the first of the four caves, Clovelly.

Checking our torches for cave worthiness, and hoping that the few who didn't have torches had eaten carrots for dinner the night before, we crawled into Clovelly. 10 minutes later the clothes were no longer looking too clean, and the hairspray had served only to attract sand particles. "Dead end" was the cry that emanated from our intrepid leader, so we all shuffled around on our hands and knees, and wound our way back out of the caves. The next cave to be conquered was White Dome Grotto, which only the people to completing Clovelly entered.

On to Boomslang, a cave that you can move through in relative comfort - hands and knees. It was here though that one of the cavers, Sally, found enough space to stand up, trip and fall over, scraping her knee in the process. Exit one of the second most experienced cavers.

From Boomslang, we made our way across to Ronan's Well, the most challenging cave to be negotiated. A few people decided that it sounded a bit too challenging, and opted to sit out. The rest of us squeezed our way through the caves, continuously adding to the collection of scrapes and bruises decorating our elbows and knees. Questions such as "Is this the hardest bit yet?", "How the hell do I get through here?" and a steady stream of expletives peppered the conversation. Excess items of clothing were surrendered to the cave gods in an attempt to get through the cervices with greater ease.

After much pushing and pulling, complete with grunting sound effects, we each made our way safely through Ronan's Well into the relative spaciousness of Robin Hood. A bit of wall climbing, followed by boulder hopping took us out into the sunlight. The sense of achievement overrode the fact that most people were a few shades darker and had their own personal sand-pits in their shoes and hair. After a few minutes break for the obligatory photographs ("That's me in the middle - the black one!"), we proceeded down the hill to the cars, exhausted but satisfied and happy.

LEADER : PAUL MACEY

*Clare Appleyard*

## Kasteel's Burrrr..uttre

Route : Up Valken Ravine and Kasteel's Gully to Kasteel's Buttress 'B, and down Kasteel's Poort.

Trying to ignore the clouds massing over Table Mountain, an eager bunch of hikers awaited Rinky's arrival, with her bus load of Leaf students, in order to head off for a pleasant amble through the Cape Point Nature Reserve. Disappointment flushed over the group when Rinky arrived with an empty bus and gently broke the news that the trip had been postponed until the following Sunday. Some disappointed faces disappeared slowly back to their warm beds and steaming coffee, while a small number refused to be beaten by the elements, and seconded Warwick's idea of conquering the mountain from Theresa-Rontree Estate instead. After some scurrying around to collect wet & cold weather gear, we assembled at the foot of the Twelve Apostles.

Soon after we got started, the path steepened significantly, and so did the general panting and gasping for breath. We stopped under an overhang on our way up Valken Ravine and reinforced ourselves with chocolate before flinging ourselves at some rather wet and slippery scrambles. Aside from soaking our warm clothing, the increasingly damp fynbos surrounded us with an invigorating fragrance, which together with a sighting of a black eagle, did much to keep spirits high. On reaching the top, our leader proceeded to transform himself into the Abominable Snowman beneath layers of jackets, gloves and a beanie, much to the envy of those who had underestimated their heat retention capacities. As a result we only stayed in the icy whirling mist at the top of Kasteel's Buttre long enough to get photographic proof of our triumph over the elements and unanimously decide that steaming coffee and a huge slice of cake would be infinitely welcome. We then descended Kasteel's Poort to a more pleasant spot in the week winter sunshine, where we thawed out and ate some lunch.

On reaching the bottom, the contest was on to see who could throw the most (if any) stones into an old beaten up metal barrel, masquerading as a rubbish bin. Boredom eventually overcome us, and we piled into the cars and headed for the nearest coffee shop. The much awaited coffee and delectable cheese- and chocolate cakes, were much savoured along with much discussion and merriment. A warm ending to an icy but thoroughly enjoyable day.

LEADER : WARWICK BOARD

*Maria Loopuyt*



## WHAT COULD HAVE BEEN

We were sitting in the car discussing. The weather had been on and off every day the last week, and the day for our hike had of course to be one with rainfall. It didn't look that bad this morning, but now the clouds were embracing the mountain, and even hiding the Pipe Track as which we intended to follow this morning. A dry warm coffee shop seemed to be a much more attractive place to spend our time.

A decision had however to be made, and as a middle aged couple started their walk in the rain, it hit our pride, and we decided to at least follow the Pipe Track for a while.

As we started our ascent from Theresa Avenue up to the Pipe Track the drizzle stopped, and our bold decision was rewarded. The temperature was fine, and we could stroll along in shorts and T-shirt.

The Pipe Track itself was an interesting experience, reminding us about what an amazing amount of struggle our ancestors must have gone through to lay down this pipe to get a reliable water supply from Table Mountain. At some parts it must have been fairly easy, but at others the pipe itself is literally hanging in the mountain side. Impressive, especially considering the technology available at the time.

We passed Woody Ravine, our planned descent, after just a short while and encouraged by the progress, we continued with a realistic hope of reaching at least the Back Table. After just a little while it started raining again just to challenge our determination. We found shelter together with three elderly ladies out on the same mission as ours. Here our raingear once again had to be put on, and we continued in the rain. Corridor Ravine was beautiful, even in the rain, as we slowly worked our way up. We reached the top wet, but still with our spirits up.

After a short snack, we continued along the top of the Aposteles towards Grootkop in order to keep warm. The mist was covering all of our surroundings making the view somewhat limited, but the track was clearly visible and easy to follow, - we thought. We missed the track leading to the top, and ended in the cracks. At least we could enjoy our lunch sheltered from the rain. As we sat there, the mist occasionally lifted enough for us to get some glimpse of Hout Bay, and even False Bay.

On our way back we finally managed to find the path to the summit, and after a short while, Grootkop could be declared as climbed by the party. We stood there in the mist and rain imagining all the views invisible to us. Several of the party members were however starting to feel cold, thus making this moment of glory a bit short. So we went down again in the mist, and followed our tracks back.

As we reached the plateau again, the clouds lifted and disappeared. Making our miserable walk in the rain into a joyride in sunshine. The walking was nice and easy, and the sun warm. We started to dry up as we rolled along at considerable pace. We passed the Saucy Dog, and soon we could turn left and enter Woody Ravine to take us down to the Pipe Track again. This ravine was worth the hike in itself. Beautiful in its' steep ruggedness with a magnificent view over the ocean. Further down the wood giving the ravine its' name become evident, and descending through this forest is an experience in itself.

We reached the Pipe Track safe and sound, and our return to Theresa Avenue was a beautiful walk in the sun.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the participants for keeping the spirit up, and making this hike memorable.

LEADER : TROND SAGLAND

*Trond Sagland*

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## INTERNATIONAL EXPEDITION SUCCEEDS

Cape Town, South Africa. A major success was registered in March 1997 as a composite international expeditionary force succeeded in scaling the heights of one of the more well known peaks in the Cape Peninsula - Chapman's Peak.

Early transport with a pick-up on Rhodes drive and the negotiating of the twisting Chapman's Peak drive accessed the car park. The intrepid adventurers survived an early scare as one of the party pulled up short with a stomach pain. This was quickly resolved. A lonely pine tree was decimated, the last islet of alien in the sea of indigenous.

Proteas, Ericas, Restios, Rameron Pigeons, Orange-breasted Sunbirds, Neddickies, Grassbirds and Redwinged Starlings delighted the contingent. The Cape was laying out its best and the American was happy.

The entire contingent summited and watched a lower level mist bank roll in over the western seaboard.

The success of the expedition was then toasted by all in the homely surrounds of the Rumbler's Tum in the quaint little Republic of Hout Bay.

LEADER : WARWICK BOARD

*Warwick Board*

## ADVENTURE HIGH IN THE HEX

Hikes with Morgan Behr as the leader are always challenging, especially so when he has planned a classic peak bagging weekend in the furthest reaches of the Hex. So it was that, on a single weekend, the four of us bagged 5 of the top 10 peaks in the Western Cape. With no time to waste we set off from the top car park at Matroosberg at 9pm on Friday evening. Hiking with a full moon and at a brisk pace we made our way to the main ski hut below Matroosberg where Morgan set a trend by making his party members cups of warm tea. After this break, and a weary eyed look at the comfortable bunks of the hut, it was off again with a 450 odd metre drag ahead of us up Matroosberg (2249m), the highest peak in the Western Cape. Upon reaching the summit soon after midnight, Morgan and Karin settled down in Panorama Hut, an ugly looking but cosy and spectacularly placed hut just close to the top, while Dave and I hunted around for a place to pitch our tent. Due to the abundance of rocks and frozen ground, we were quite unsuccessful in finding a large enough suitable spot on any of the vlaktes near the summit, so instead decided to bivouac. It was quite an experience, sleeping out in mid-winter on the windswept summit of the Cape's highest peak. Not surprisingly, it was a fairly chilly night (for Dave and I that is).

The next morning we were woken just before sunrise by Morgan bearing a supply of tea. Wonderful tea, followed by a spectacular sunrise. Yes please! The view was quite awesome; almost the whole of the Western Cape stretched before us, northwards the Kouebokkeveld and Cederberg; eastwards deep into the Karoo, south and west, mountains, the least being the whole of the Hex! For this time of year the lack of snow, except for very isolated patches, was quite extraordinary. By 8:15am we were off and down Matroosberg. Our next target was Conical Peak (2045m) which is just within the top 10 peaks, although for what we were about to do that day it was not much more than a blip to be pocketed. We left most of our gear at a small red hut on the neck between Matroosberg and Conical and carried on with day packs. To the top of Conical was our warm up and then we were off to Rooideberg (2208m) [referred to as Rooiberg] reaching the top by 11am. We added our ascent to the summit record, found in a jar under a cairn. This bore the name of the legendary Hex explorer, F Berrisford, who first visited this area in the 1920's. Gee our names would be in good company. After a brief rest it was onward to a very distant and grand looking Groothoek Peak.

For me at least this required full hiking battle gear as the wind was pumping and air was bitterly cold. We followed a ridge over some very rough terrain, characterised largely by boulder scree slopes, and ended up on a neck from which we could look into the very heart of the gigantic and awesome Groothoek Kloof. From there the route was ill-defined with no cairns, and this required careful navigation up a series of tricky slopes.

An important consideration in such rugged areas is to find your way back down, in this case the way we came, and this challenge added to the excitement. We summited Groothoek Peak (2099m) at 2pm. Again the views were spectacular, but there was not much time to waste and after our obligatory Kendal's Mint Cake, summit photos and lunch we were off, back to our gear at the little red hut.

The return journey was long and tiring, having to pass the summit of Rooideberg once again, and having to fight the elements. By the time we got to our gear the sun was setting and I felt really knackered. But we still had to find a campsite that evening so there was nothing more than a very quick rest before we were on our way. We camped on some vlaktes close to the top of the main ski lift in what can be described as a classic Hex campsite, perfect for tents. We got here at 6:30pm shortly after which Dave realised that he had forgotten a small but vital component of his stove at the bivouac site of the previous night. Much to our amazement he did not seem to be out of energy and went off after supper to retrieve his stove part, making it to the top of Matroosberg and back in little over an hour.

The next morning it was up at sunrise with Zonklip Peak (about 2100m) [referred to as Sonklip] to conquer. Morgan described the climb as a 'real mountaineers route'; and so it proved to be. The closer we got to the mountain the less likely the frontal approach looked possible, at least without rock climbing gear. However the route was beacons, but still had to be negotiated carefully, winding its way along ledges on the face of the mountain, then up a small ravine and finally along the summit ridge to the top. From the campsite it had taken an hour and a half of fast, non-stop walking and we summited at 8:45am. As before there was a fantastic view from the top, this being the most easterly peak of significance in the Hex River Range. I must rate this as one of the best peaks I have yet climbed. We did not hang around for long since it was particularly cold (amply evidenced in the form of huge chunks of solid ice) and since a pretty fierce wind was blowing.

After completing our stint of peak bagging is seemed like a long haul back to the campsite, then on to the ski hut and finally back to the car by early afternoon. An indication of the remoteness of the area is that the only people we met the entire trip was 2 families at the ski hut, on our return. (A couple of these people looked seriously depressed by the almost total lack of snow.) We had done 5 of the 10 highest peaks in the Western Cape and in the process more than 2600m of ascent and 2600m of descent. Not bad at all for the weekend and looking back on it now, probably the best way to sum up the hike is by the phrase used jokingly halfway up Zonklip: "Boys (and girl), now this is adventure".

LEADER : MORGAN BEHR

*Pierre Hoffa*

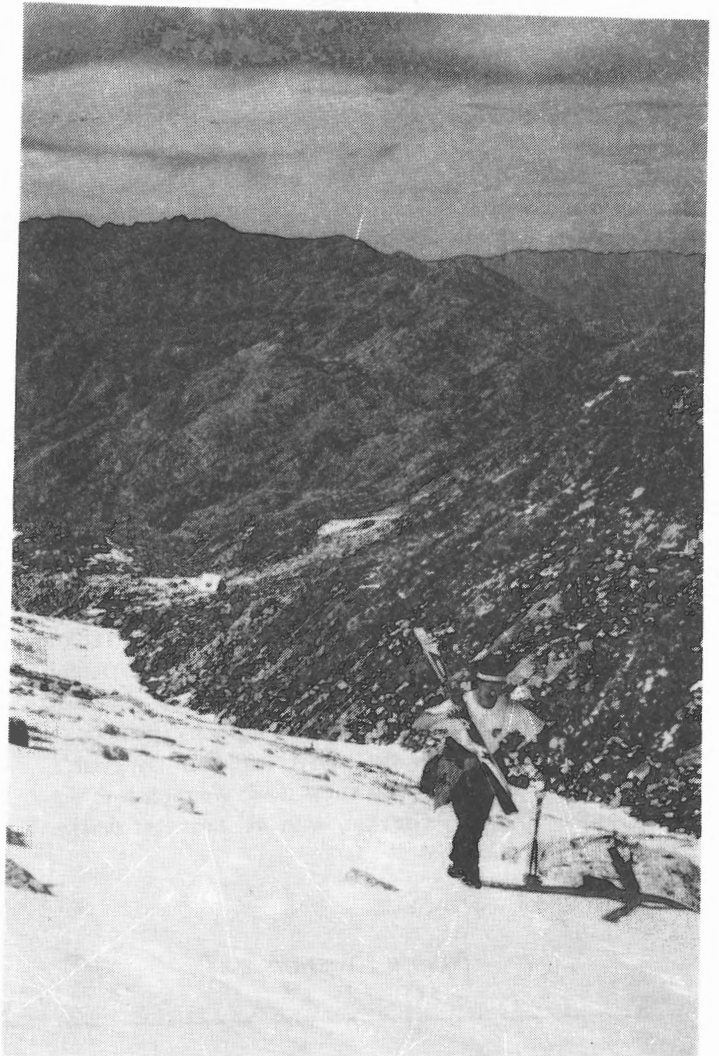






# WAAIHOEK

THE PRESENT AND THE PAST.



## BOESMANSKLOOF TRAVERSE

Saturday, saw our group of fourteen leaving a rainy Cape Town in our tracks, as we headed off to the mountains. We were off to experience the Boesmanskloof Traverse, better known as Greyton MacGregor Trail.

After a great animal ice-breaker, we set off following die-baas-van-die-plaas- namely our leader Rinky who took us (unintentionally!) on a warm up circuit up the mountain and then right back to the start! However, we soon found the correct path and became immersed in the mountain fynbos. Our trip was impeccably timed, seeming to correspond with the onset of spring. Purple Erica's and Protea's of all varieties were out in all profusion and made for really beautiful scenery.

The hike is a 14 kilometer route which is easily completed by anyone of moderate fitness, while really giving you the feeling that you are "in the mountains". Despite Jas's complaints that "I never even knew these muscles existed!", we soon had conquered the main uphill section of the trail, spurred on by heated discussion of the Olympics.

We lunched at what must be one of the most spectacular spots in the Western Cape. A high waterfall plunges into an icy pool - which was impressively braved by most of us hot and sweaty hikers - surrounded by rocks perfect for an after lunch nap, lizard - like in the sun.

Our final ascent (very steep for those of us foolish enough to choose the "scenic route"! ) led up to our overnight hut. We were amazed to find hot water showers (although some rather foolishly neglected to even try the hot tap...), electric lights, a fridge, a kettle and even pillows - real luxury in hiking circles!

Our evening was truly memorable - who could forget broomdancing, chubby bunny, Camilla's psychological prowess, and especially our drunk towel clad fellow hiker and his aborted pick-up attempts of our non-Afrikaans speaking group members! The range of dinners was extraordinary, with top honours having to go to Rod, Camilla and Nick's gourmet trifle.

After farewell gifts of "blushing brides" from farmer Oosthuizen, we set off on the return journey. The return was along the same route, but it's amazing how different things look when you're coming from the opposite direction. The hike homeward seemed to fly by (perhaps as we were trying to beat the rain ushered on by Nick's raindancing?) and before we knew it we were back in the picturesque village of Greyton, with its' lawns of daisies and quiet laid back vibe.

LEADER : RINKY VAMVADELIS

*Nicola Erasmus*

## A PEEK AT A PEAK

A perfect spring day - sunny with a slight breeze - attracted an excellent turnout for this hike to the summit of Simonsberg. Our first meeting point was at Die Braak in Stellenbosch, where we got a taste of the small town atmosphere of Stellenbosch on a Sunday while Ianni bought fruit at a supermarket.

We then headed for the farm at the start of the hike, where Pierre confirmed our permission to hike, with the farmer. The farm roads are extremely bumpy and quite steep and one junction required a three (or four, or five) point turn. The cars were parked in a vineyard and we set off, careful to avoid the electric fence and the farm Staffordshire Bullterrier, which was intent on following us right up the mountain.

The route to the summit was steep, but straightforward. The view from the summit was breathtaking, taking in Table Mountain, Robben Island, False Bay, Stellenbosch, Franschhoek, Paarl and many of the highest peaks in the Western Cape. We visited a cave just below the summit and wrote in the log book. The entrance to the cave has been partially blocked off by stone walls, making an effective emergency shelter.

The descent involved a ridge walk and a steep kloof. Unfortunately, we lost the route between the ridge and the kloof. Pierre and Axel spent almost half an hour looking for the cairns, eventually found by Axel. Nearly three hours later, after several pitches of mossy and slippery scrambling, we were back at the cars.

Everyone seemed to thoroughly enjoy this hike, one of the most rewarding (in terms of views) in the Western Cape. Ended the day with the traditional M.S.C. visit to the frozen yoghurt shop in Stellenbosch.

LEADER : PIERRE HOFFA

*Alan Shapiro*



# F E A R

I chalked my hand, dipped them into my small leather bag. All climbers have these bags. This is where they keep their balls, and their chalk. I tied into the rope, making sure that the knot was secure. I dusted my shoes and eased myself onto the wall. I paused and then moved slowly, carefully, finding my rhythm as the sequence of manoeuvres unfolded before me.

"Reach up, push, lock off, clip that bolt - now the rope, stretch left and lay-away, crank it now, push, fingers lock into that hidden crack." And so it goes on. I merge with the rock, become one with it. I see only the immediate rock around me and the next chalked holds.

The climbing gets harder with the holds becoming thinner. Moving delicately, the choreography of the rock ballet is perfect as I glide towards the belay stance. The rock begins to overhang and I can feel my arms pumping out to the max. At first it feels good that I'm climbing well on hard rock, but as I get higher I realise that I am still short of the stance.

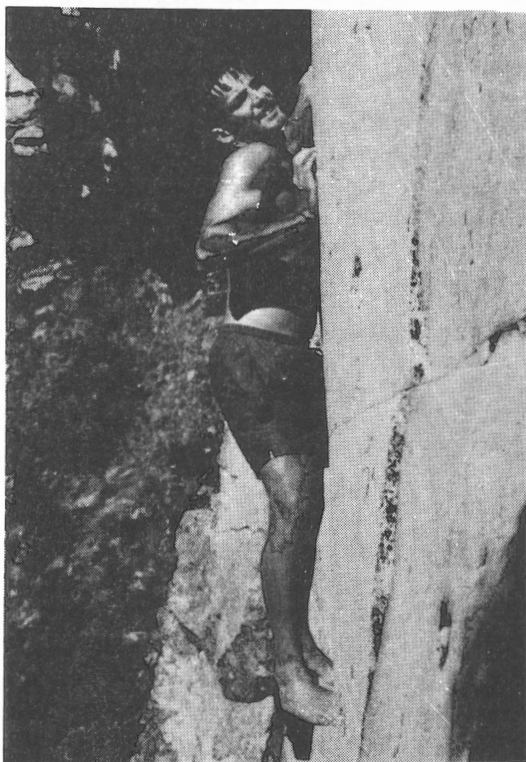


PHOTO : JEREMY WAKEFORD

"It must be through the next roof, will I make it, I must !" The protection here is thin and would probably zipper if I fell. "Don't think about that, not now. Concentrate that energy in your arms. Lock off, place a micro-wire, chalk your hands, quick !" I begin to lose my small world, becoming aware of the broad expanse of leaning rock, the infinite space between my feet. "Come now, concentrate,

move your arms, chalk your hands again, watch your feet." The holds seem smaller now, more rounded. I hold on tighter, I cannot fall now. I reach the relative safety of a crack. My hands and fingers seem remote from my arms, the rock. They are totally pumped now, screaming for rest. My heart is pounding, sweat blinding my eyes.

I've passed the point of no return, I'm committed. This is it. With a savage strength fueled by terror of the fall I claw my way out, nails scraping a frantic tattoo as I struggle to lock into the niche. I'm totally horizontal now and I can make out a white face below me, mouthing unheard encouragement.

Now, one final move and I'm there, I can see the bolt on the lip. I know there is a jug there. So big. So inviting. This hold must be overflowing with the balls of previous dancers. I tense myself, coiled tight and ready to explode. With a scream of fear and tension I launch myself. At the critical moment I feel a sudden loss of traction as I explode towards the lip, towards that haven.

Time seems to slow as my body arcs crazily outwards, chalk encrusted fingers moving towards the outer edge of my suddenly small world, towards that last hold that means life to me. It seems to get no closer. Then suddenly my fingers find the edge and my hand clips the bolt in a synergy of adrenaline and ingrained reflex.

I hang there, wasted, oblivious to everything, but that I had come close to losing the balls in my chalkbag. A cry of jubilation welled up inside me, I had done it! I had taken the risk and I had been gripped but I had made it. Life has taken on a sweeter aspect and I see a brighter future ahead of me.

*Ross McDonald*

## Kalk Bay Climbing Capers

The Kalk Bay Crag offers both vertical and overhanging climbing in a pleasant setting above the harbour. The climbs are short and pumpy, and make for some good cranking. Fortunately the weather was kind to us, as the cold front which was forecast only arrived in time for lectures on Monday morning. The three earlier routes were climbed by all, with loads of fun being had both on and off the rock. Speaking of off the rock, Ross M'D fell while clipping the chains on "Cling Thing" (24) and landed, somewhat excitingly, below his belayer! Earlier in the day, the long-standing open project "Pocket Rocket" eventually succumbed to the effort of Jayson Orton. It was great to see everyone staying as long as they did, which means they must be getting fitter!

LEADER : ROSS M'DONALD

*Jayson Orton*



# THE ADVENTURE

We met on the Saturday lunchtime just as South Africa dismissed Australia for 108 for 8 in a match the rest of which we would miss. I haven't been a cricket fan for long so as soon as I reached Bainskloof the magic of the mountains eclipsed all such, let's face it, rather boring thoughts of sport.

Two of the three car loads arrived and were about to set off for the shelter when finally the third arrived bearing gifts of freshly purchased wine - always a good reason to be later!

After a pleasant walk along the valley to the accompaniment of baboons barking, we reached the shelter where we were soon swimming in the crystal clear pool. Roger introduced us to the hidden delights of the stream with a mask and snorkel. Although it looked utterly ridiculous we spent ages watching the surprisingly colourful little fish and crabs going about their business.

The evening passed with us producing our own culinary specialties, ranging from two-minute noodles to meals prepared with fresh garden vegetables, notably chillies! Later Adrienne spotted a spectacular shooting star, it's fluorescent trail hung in the sky, proving to those who'd missed it that it wasn't a port - induced vision!

We awoke at dawn and ate hearty breakfast before cleaning camp. As we were about to leave Ianni and Steve appeared and joined us on the first ascent. Once we reached the grass band and bright morning sun, we stopped for a view appreciation break. Here our late arrivals left us and carried on up and over to investigate a possible route through a farmer's land.

We moved along above the gorge and up to a neck below Bailey's itself. The going was rather tough due (mostly) to the steep angle of the rocky ground we were traversing and Tom was glad for the boots he had invested in for the trip. Roger stopped occasionally to look at some type of vegetation or other, whilst the rest of us found ourselves subconsciously racing one another to the top.

Andre and I made it and chewed dried fruit whilst patiently waiting for the others, gazing across towards distant Cape Town. Somehow they bypassed us and had already begun the final scramble to the peak. On reaching the summit we were somewhat dismayed to see Andrew a hundred yards away on the real peak. A quick dash across the boulders brought us to the beacon where the obligatory photograph was taken. My flag was almost whisked away by the strong southerly wind!

Taking shelter, a jovial lunch was enjoyed by all before we headed off towards the eastern ridge above the camp below. Waaihoek was easily visible and looked as magnificent as ever. We moved fast along the ridge - top, taking care to make sure we didn't find ourselves half-way down the wrong side and into another valley. At last we came across what appeared to be the best way down and began an arduous slog downhill. It took an age to appear to have made any progress and negotiating our way around cliff-faces and dry waterfalls took it's toll on us all.

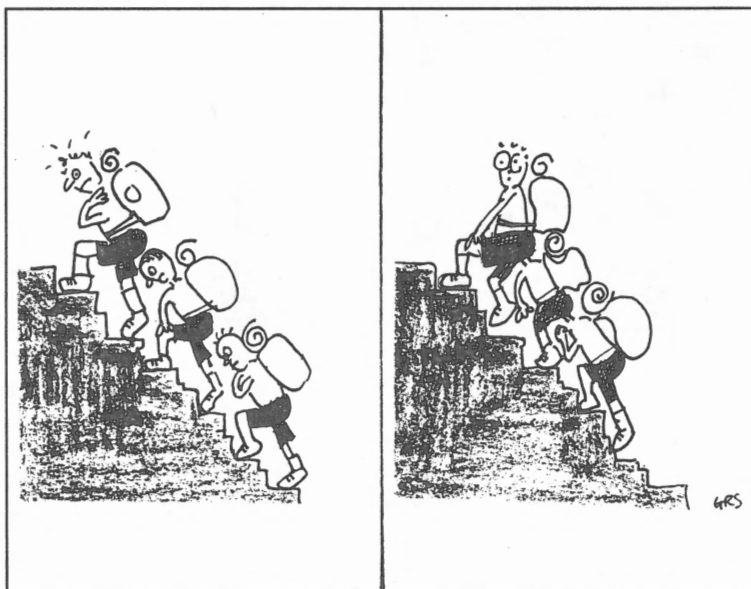
On nearing the stream a new energy took over and encouraged you on, as the vegetation grew thicker, the noise of falling water got louder and then you were there, a beautiful rock pool of cool water into which we threw ourselves. Absolute bliss.

On arrival back at camp, tea was leisurely drunk whilst looking back, with considerable satisfaction, up to Bailey's. Several people felt obliged to rush back to the city where the mundane was waiting and expecting them. Roger, Adrienne, Andrew and I enjoyed a last swim and, making sure there was no sign of our expedition left (other than a journal entry in the shelter), made our way back towards the cars in the dying light.

It is truly amazing how much one can squeeze into twenty-four hours. With just a little more effort than switching on the television (to watch the cricket!) requires when the glorious Cape Mountains are so close. If only I could manage my time for studying a little better I'd be out there a whole lot more.

LEADER : ROGER DIAMOND

*Greg Hutton-Squire*



BY : GRAHAM SHILLINGTON

## ANOTHER HOARY TRIP

After the obligatory visit to that port-of-call *Bergsig* [at which can also be found the last flush-loo stop: this is one of those "experienced travel tips" for novices, do take note!] we arrived in cool, sunny weather at the feet of the Hex River Mountains. A lovely day.

We fought our way tooth and nail (screams of anguish from male and female alike as our keratin was deformed in the most HORRIBLE of ways!) along icy traverses, through glacial eskers, against gale-force to emerge finally at dear hoary.

Thankfully (from some of our points of view) a couple of 12kg gas bottles had to be toted up by the most esteemed Rod-the-Finn and Warren-the-Hurd. That stroll up to Waaihoek on that 1:1 gradient is rather strenuous for those of us as similar to Arnold as we would like to be. As we passed *Pells* we applauded its' rejuvenated appearance - brilliant job! Also to be commended for action of a different sort are those who swam. The five-or-so intrepid souls became blue of course, but it's a nice colour anyway.

Once at the hut the usual itinerary was enacted : drink to the delightful sunset from Saaihoek Peak (hic), pressed the jaffle iron into extended service, enjoyed a meal fit for royalty (I was a chef), slept all in a row (as a matter of interest, how did those mattresses get up the mountain?). Woke up and with great excitement - thought for a second that it had snowed. It was mist. Oh well. Oh yes, there was one incident to mar the peaceful sleep of the innocent (?!), Rod-the-Finn decided to leave at some ungodly hour of darkness in the morning - @#\$%^&\*()!!~etc.

At a decent hour on Sunday morning ten grubs took a while to grow heads. Later, four even grew appendages and went to wreak havoc on Mamakos hut by temporarily renailing two roof sheets with lost nails from the surrounding countryside. [Picture of heroic figure wreathed in mist with gloved appendages raised in triumph]. Another scrubbed the kitchen!

Then we toddled on down. A Grand Weekend Away.

LEADER : WARREN HURD

*Tansy Horwood*

## Little Lion's Head Sundowners

Did you know that Cape Town boasts two Lion's Heads I didn't ?! But those in the know, who are invariably in the UCT MSC, decided to introduce those of us who are ignorant to Little Lion's Head - over looking Hout Bay, at the top of Suikerbossie. And so for the first MSC walk of the 1997 year - sundowners on this little known peak was organised.

The usual arrangement preceded the walk : meeting at the info center, hop into a car and re-gather at the destination, in this case Suikerbassie Restaurant.

The Southwester wasn't co-operating and made the climb up harder, and the climb down faster ( at some points nearly too fast). However, the views of Llandudno, Hout Bay and the Atlantic were breattaking. The combination, seen from the top, needed to be toasted and so the Amarula, white wine and good old OB's were broken out, not to mention the chips, biscuits and GORP ( good old raisins and peanuts). All this was enjoyed from every rocky shelter that could be found against Mr SW. Being slightly overcast the sunset wasn't that spectacular, but the setting sun is not the only reason for sundowners!

The hike home, in twilight and the moonlight, is always my favorite part. There is something about seeing the world in black and greys that just hits home. The added danger of a twisted ankle on an unseen rock creates an extra tension which I enjoy. However upon reaching the bottom I was not upset that no injury had occured. If an unfortunate incident had happened, though, I am sure Dr Colen could have sorted it out - so on worries there! It is always good to know that one has a qualified ( if not practicing) doctor on a hike.

Anyway, all in all a superb starter hike : relaxing, beautiful and easy. A brilliant start to a brilliant year for the MSC.

LEADER : RINKY VAMVADELIS

*Troye Wallett*



## A HIKE IN THE BEAUTIFUL HEX

**M**y word! What a hike. For those of you, who don't know the Hex River Mountains, this is a good way to become acquainted with them, you should be reasonably fit though. Wow, nothing beats being in the middle of nowhere with the most amazing views, needles of rock, sheer cliffs, beautiful Proteas and birds and knowing that your group of five are the only five people around for quite a distance. This hike helps one to map out the Hex in your mind, it's great to be able to point out the peaks, most of which I have not climbed, but now have the motivation to do so, and also to feel that when sitting in the doorway of Hoare Hut you can point out to some easily awed fresher that, "you see that scree slope on the other side of the valley? Well at the bottom of it you can see something glinting, well that hut is Perry Refuge and one of the huts you stay in on the Hex Traverse."

The route is as follows. We drove out to Worcester on the Friday and hiked for about two and three quarter hours along a bridle path, winding up the mountain from Onserus to Thomas Hut, which belongs to the Worcester branch of the MCSA. This section is like an easy Waaihoek ascent. We got to the hut to be greeted by an alarm system and a series of bolts and padlocks that would have made Houdini flinch!

The next day, Saturday, we went up the mountain behind the hut to the saddle and wound our way around the mountain to the summit of Fonteintjesberg (1989.3 m.a.s.l.). The views are amazing, from up there you can look down at the valleys around you and recall various well known peak names such as Baboon Peak and Buffelshoek. Down below you can see Pulpit Neck and the descent to it looks rather daunting, which turned out not to be too bad. Also visible is the scree slope in front of Horseshoe Ridge and Horseshoe Ridge Peaks, which turned out to be OK as there is quite a reasonable path across it. Once we descended to the neck and turned to go across the scree, Woolworth's Buildings looked stunning and we didn't need any sales assistants to sell their appeal to us. On examining the cliffs of these amazing Buildings, I declined to attempt to climb them, although this would be an

interesting experience to any climber. We then turned the corner and went northwards around the slopes of Horseshoe Peak looking at the overwhelming cliff faces and needles and peaks of Jan Du Toitskloof opposite. The last stage that day was to climb over Mount Brodie and stop to admire the view as well as pick out a very small looking Hoare Hut on the other side of the valley on the way. We arrived at Perry Refuge at last. All that hut is, is a refuge- or rather a sardine can on the side of the mountain. A swim in the freezing cold river nearby shocked our systems and helped deal with our rather tired muscles.

The next day, Sunday, we walked from Perry Refuge to Pells Hut and down Waaihoek, this section I actually found the hardest going because it was a lot of scrambling up and down in the beginning. We were also in a hurry to meet up with the group of people who had gone up Waaihoek with Rinky that weekend. Even though this up and down appealed to my climber's mind, it tired the knees some what. Thereafter it was boring grind, grind, grind across grassy patches to Pells, the croquet green never looked so welcome. We winded our way down Waaihoek to meet up with Ray Greenwood, a representative of the other group, at Middle Hut. He and Carel galloped down in order to collect Carel's dad's 4x4 from the other end, at Worcester. The pool at Base Hut provided a welcome if rather chilly swim to round of a very satisfying weekend.

If you enjoy the Hex, do this hike, it is really worth it, I am definitely going to do it again. The only draw back is this, you need a very good leader who knows the area, in some place the path is non-existent and the cairns are scarce, also if the weather is bad, we were lucky - the weather was good, and you can't see where you are going you could get horribly lost.

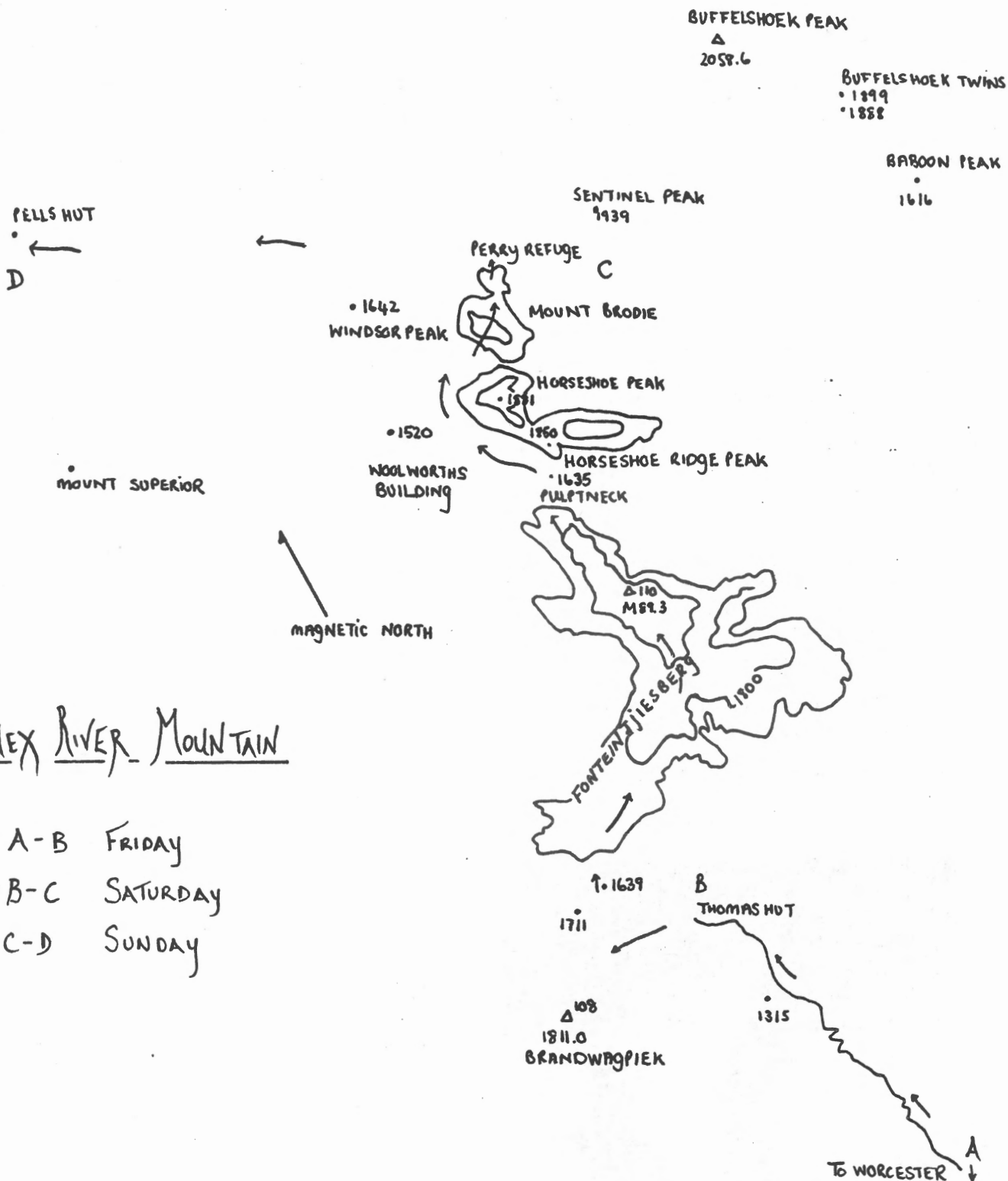
LEADER : CAREL HAUMANN

*Emma Sealy*

PHOTO : REBECCA GRAY







## HEX RIVER MOUNTAIN

- A-B FRIDAY
- B-C SATURDAY
- C-D SUNDAY



# Drakensberg - Hutted Trail

We were off to the Alps to go skiing with the Mountain and Ski Club, on their first ever fully sponsored overseas skiing trip.

*Wait a minute.....*

The trip was to a snowy place, but not off to Europe.

The first night on the journey to the Drakensberg, was the stop-over town of Windburg. Strategically placed along the N1, just before you run right out of petrol. This town has the oddest assortment of inbred locals. It also has a hotel where you can stay for R70, and your servants can stay for R25. Cornelis negotiated a rate somewhere just above servant status for R30.

From Windburg the group (referred to from here on as GIK, Graham is king) moved on to Highland Nook, where we met up with the full UCT Drakensberg expedition. That night it snowed. Those that knew what snow was, being born in Europe, showed the ignorant South Africans how to build snow women with big breasts, igloos and snow-balls. One of the members of GIK, Samantha (also a member of SINK, Samantha is not king) took great delight in killing other hikers with deadly, rock-filled snowballs.

The next day the snow continued to fall, making the roads impassable. An organised assault was made on a nearby house. It was easily captured and soon a lot of UCT hikers

were warming their hands against the fiery glow of the roasting occupants.

The following day, the sky was clear and GIK departed Highland Nook on its ambitious attempt to walk from hut to hut along the foothills of the Drakensberg. A walk of one minute brought GIK to the first hut - Pholela. Thomas proceeded to drink ten beers, and Dean kept everyone entertained with his jokes and games.

The next few days were spent hiking, and here is what happened in no particular order:

- Dean prepared a gourmet meal, with candles to add extra romance.
- Thomas said: "*Wait a minute!*" about one thousand times, and Graham laughed every time. Eventually Graham ended up saying "*Wait a minute!*" in his sleep. We played a card game, that made arseholes of us all, because that was the aim of the game. Caryn, being a sweet-fairy, handed out sweets at various intervals in her subtle attempt to destroy the livelihood of her nemesis, the tooth-fairy. Cornelis had a knife fight with Andrew one night and Andrew ended up losing both his legs. He had to be dragged the rest of the way by Cornelis, who felt quite bad about the whole thing, but not very bad, because he had lost both eyes.
- Dean sat in a frosty pool surrounded by snow and waited patiently, while pictures were taken of the daring feat. Cornelis couldn't see what the big deal was all about, Andrew wished he had feet, Thomas said, "*Wait a minute*" which made Graham laugh, and Dean waited - which he wished he hadn't done, later on.

When everyone eventually parted, Sandra, Caryn and Samantha shook hands, and the boys, who had all bonded so nicely, wept and wept. They hugged and vowed to be reunited one day, at a reunion in Ronderbosch.

LEADER : GRAHAM SHILLINGTON

*Graham Shillington*



PHOTOS : CARYN MAXWELL



# Drakensberg - Acott's Trip

The July vac is one of the few occasions when MSC members regularly get together to undertake demanding trips, and the Drakensberg trip has become an annual feature. This year there were three separate Drakensberg trips, all in the same vicinity - the southern area of the 'berg.

The three journeys were planned to all begin on July 1, and as June 30 came to a close, roughly 25 MSC members congregated on Highland Nook campsite - but unfortunately so too did storm clouds, and as dusk wore off, we were greeted with a snowfall which was to continue throughout the night and through to midday the following day. Roads were impassable, so we resigned ourselves to enjoying the snow - one project we attempted was a mammoth snow man.

After a day, just as we were becoming utterly bored of the snow, it had melted sufficiently for the roads to be passable. So in the afternoon of July 2 the three groups made their way to their different starting points. Our group joined the Giant's Cup Trail people in heading for Cobham forestry station.

Not knowing what the hiking conditions were going to be, it was decided to use the first day as a recce for the remaining three days. Starting from Cobham, we made our way to the Siphongweni caves (after searching for the turnoff) before heading for the Mzimkhulwana River for lunch - beware that there is no path between the caves and the river, although there is one marked in the map. We made our way back to Cobham on an easy path via Mzimkhulwana Hut, completing the 21km round-trip in 7 hours of walking.

The conditions underfoot were adjudged to be desirable, with little snow remaining on the little 'berg, while the top remained covered in a thick blanket of whiteness to be avoided, and some supper-side discussion settled on an obvious route (which would offer us some 'outs' if necessary).

Thus, with two-and-a-half days of hiking remaining, we set out for Gxalingwene cave. As is normal in the Drakensberg, it took us a day just to get anywhere of consequence; the paths on the first day were straight forward, even the turnoff to the cave itself. We found the cave immaculately stocked with a table on which to cook, ample sleeping space, and a fresh supply of water.

The second day led us 'up, up and away' to 'The Hub', a meaningless mound at 2556m. Nevertheless, pushing the altitude brought us up into increased amounts of snow, and we topped out on 'The Hub' in brilliant midmorning sun

after 2.5 hours walking, despite a somewhat challenging climb. From here we traversed at an altitude of 2500m along the southern slopes of Sakeng, Hodgson's north peak. Being southerly orientated, these slopes have received very little sunlight since the first snowfalls. As the snow became thicker, so the party (which had initially been cruising) slowed to a snail's pace, eventually settling at approximately 1 km/h. For most, this was the most challenging part of the trip, as we were quite literally wading in metre deep snow, and the short three kilometre section seemed to take for ever - especially for Steve, who was breaking the way, (thanks, Steve).

Upon reaching the Pholela River we lunched. Gazing up at the mammoth cliffs above us, many were tempted to head for the escarpment, but the lack of remaining daylight and the heavy winds up top evident by the occasional vortex of snow made reason the victor of the dilemma, and we headed on to the lower sections of the Pholela River. We camped in Pholela Cave, having reached it at 17h00, but found it slightly lacking in creature comforts - at least compared to Gxalingwene cave. (out there everything is relative).

The following morning everyone was up surprisingly early, and eager to get back to the cars. The weather was beginning to look foul, and a detour via the 'Lakes District' was vetoed in favour of an early return to the cars (and hence warm clothes, good food and the rugby) - so we strolled back to Cobham in a couple of short hours.

All in all, it was disappointing to have had the journey cut two days short, but a marvelous group truly made the most of our time there, and I feel confident in saying that a fabulous time was had by all.

PS - if ever using showers in hiking trail huts when the users of the huts are not around, be sure to leave someone on watch for the eminent return of the 'three little bears'.

LEADER : DAVID ACOTT

*David Acott*





# "PUMPED ON THE PIMPERNEL"

You couldn't see the mountain at all, just a silky white curtain. No way, Jose. When I climb, I like to see where the hell my leader's gone, I don't like getting blown off the face like a loose roof-tile, and I don't like climbing up waterfalls either. Having cleared up any confusion there may have been, I asked Warwick if he had an alternative to the designated 'Right Face of Table Mountain' trad climb. "Mais oui," he says, "how 'bout a *superb* five-pitch route at Muizenberg crag?" You bet, we reply; less cloud, less rain (and, incidentally, a much shorter walk-in).

An hour later, we are puffing and panting below the red-yellow wall of rock, admiring the vista of Seekoevlei and the sprawling Cape Flats. The first task is to select three teams from the nine intrepids (I never was much good at those snooker-ball questions in stats). At this point Jayson offers to lead a different route - slightly harder, mind you - in order to ease up the congestion. Wait a minute here: we're novices, you know! "No problem," says Jayson, "it's only F2/15, except the crux on the third pitch which I always have trouble with." This coming from a guy who leads 26 on trad. But hey, there aren't any other takers besides the Bugman, and unable to shake off the 'buck stops here' mentality common to all chairpersons, I volunteer.

And so Jayson takes off on the first pitch of "Snap", and rapidly disappears as Troye and I get cricks in our necks. That's good: as long as we can't see him, it means the route's not overhanging. A short while later, Jayson's voice tumbles down the rock: "Belay on blue, climb when ready!" My turn. It's a cinch. Great big amphora's and cauldrons just where you want them. It isn't long before I join our leader and wait for Troye and his "Out-there" magazine. Sadly, the mag loses grip and takes a free fall to the bottom, so there ain't no prizes today. The next pitch is also a thoroughly enjoyable, relaxing F2.

Then comes the interesting part, Jayson's personal nemesis (well, in his early climbing days, anyway). But it doesn't hold him back this time, and soon it's my go. It starts with about two metres of near-vertical slab, ending in a foot-wide roof you have to pull through. Trouble is, hiking boots aren't too good for smearing, which means extra strain on the arms in the take-off. There being no other way, I plant my feet flat on the slab, pull up on a right hold above my head, lock off while the left hand reaches up and over the overhang and barely makes it to the jug. Then I jam the left elbow against a knob, pivot off the forearm and swing over the lip. Jayson's impressed, and the rest is plain sailing. Graded 15, His Infinite Wisdom believes it's more like 17. I agree. And I did it.

Grinning like a donkey, I poke my nose over the edge to see the traffic jam on the other route. Someone hasn't even got off the ground yet, poor chap. And we are finished. So

Jayson says: "Wanna try another one?" and we say, "Sure, why not, that was a piece of cake." We scurry along and down the walk-out and back to the starting blocks. This time we're going in search of the 'Elusive Pimpernel'. Jayson mumbles something about a prow with a hand rail. Sounds like something for the blind.

Our leader glides up the first pitch, commenting on the way: "This little finger pocket is pretty useful," and "this section probably requires rock shoes." Very encouraging. After some time (this must be a long pitch - at least I hope that's the reason) Jayson bellows down that I can climb. Only thing is, I can't. Try as I might, I can't get more than two feet off the ground, 'cause the darn thing's overhanging, I haven't got enough power to lock off with hardly anything for the leaded feet, and I haven't got long enough reach to get to the left-hander. So I peel off, and fall right onto Troye's strategically placed knee, adding injury to insult. Okay, Bugman, your turn - I need a rest. So Daddy Longlegs simply pulls himself up and over and scampers up the face. Meanwhile I'm trying to shake my fingers off and breathe like I'm in labour.

Soon - too soon, in fact - Troye has taken up his station on Jayson's belay ledge, somewhere up in the heavens. Take two. Fall two. Cut. "Friggin' hell, there's got to be another way up this thing!" So I start to the right of the route, where it's not overhanging, but someone's forgotten to place convenient grips. And I'm staring a wicked pendulum in the face. Fear chases me up, and then I break left and rejoin the proper route. Good. Not so good, actually, because I've just broken rule number one of trad climbing: don't get pumped. And it's only the start of the first pitch. Luckily, things get more manageable for a while, with some easy scrambling. Then I get to the crux. It's a pretty small roof, to tell the truth, overhanging a dihedral (picture a vertical book open ninety degrees). So I'm standing at the bottom of this thing, wondering where the hell my belayer is, and whether he's still awake. I yell to him, and the reply comes from the next floor up. OK. I stem up the dihedral until I reach the roof, and promptly become stuck, my feet hardly lower than my butt. The gravity of the situation weighs on my mind. Eventually it dawns on me that I've got to move out left and around the overhang. Committing myself, I manage to stretch my left arm far enough out of its socket to grab the hold, gratefully transferring weight off my screaming legs. Then I realise there's no place for my right paw. Big dilemma, since my left hand won't hold forever (remember, the oxy-acetylene torches have been at work on my forearms for some time already). Warwick's voice echoes in my head: "On trad climbs, you don't fall!"



There's only one thing for it, and that's to jerk my left hand up (no mean feat, when most of your bulk's depending on it) and slap it down four centimetres - no more, no less - to the left, making room to match with the right hand. Got it. Then comes the hard part: pulling up and trying to lock off so as to reach up to the next hold. I make the decision: I am *not* gonna fall. I squeeze out every joule of energy stored in my body, and when I finally make it to the end of the pitch, I flop onto the ledge like a not-quite-set jelly. After a couple of minutes I remember to start breathing again.

Recovering, I watch as Jayson takes off on the final pitch. After a brief scramble, he reaches another dihedral, only whereas the previous one was a pocket dictionary, this is the complete Oxford. With tentacle-like limbs he scuttles across the rock and in no time is silhouetted against the sky on a hanging belay: horizontal legs spread apart with feet pasted on the rock and arms free, suspended by the waist from a piece of pro or two. Soon the Bugman passes him and it's my turn. "Isn't there another way?"

Standing on a narrow ledge and leaning against the right-hand page, my eyes scan the opposite wall. A bomber hand-rail above head-height runs horizontally the full three metres of the prow. A foot or two lower down is a parallel crack, but below that the rock's flat as a twelve-year-old. Oh boy, nothing for the feet. At this stage, there is no backing out, so I feed my fingers into the hand-rail crack and inch them out to the left as far as I can without overbalancing. Next, I simply step off the ledge onto air. Legs ape a grandfather clock, swinging back and forth until the friction of toe-cap on rock grinds them to a halt. Hanging freely, I walk my hands along the rail. The balloons in my arms are expanding rapidly, so there's no time to lose. I cast my left leg out and it hooks on a tiny protrusion on the arete. Just then my arms give up the ghost and I sag onto the rope and manage to transfer weight onto boots that are far too precariously placed on minuscule edges. Shaking the red coals out of my arms, I prepare for one final effort. I contort and claw my way up and under the boss, who's still hanging loose. Shaking and spent, I sit in a daze on top of the prow as the small crowd of onlookers at the top of the other route pack up to go home.

*Jeremy Wakeford*

## A WALL-JOCK EXPERIMENTS WITH REAL ROCK

It was my first time.

The real rush of an outdoor climb.

NO MORE grasping for resin holds, and wood

I might just leave that all for good...

The yellow face and sky of blue

Such an amazing contrast.

Memories of the Sports Centre faded away,

A natural climb hid the real blast...

The 16 was a ladder, a stroll in the breeze

19 had me pumped.

Mr 23 took me, double overhang (with hand jams)

Got to the top and almost jumped.

So now, I've found it

Dope on a rope, the elusive ledge

gives me the edge, and the hope that

my arms will cope.

*Ivan Ayliffe*

My sincere and absolute thanks do to all who were there for helping me achieve one of the coolest rushes I have had so far, but especially Ross McDonald and Jeremy Wakeford for showing me the ropes and to Emma for her GRUNTING.

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*The date* : Sunday 02/11/97

*The time* : 11H00

*The crew* : Chris Harris and Warwick Board

*The objective* : Wormhole Ravine via the Hiddingh route.

*The weather* : Warm, with a heavy southeaster competing against a northwester which is threatening to win. Strong lenticular clouds occasionally cascade over the Back Table.

### *The Story*

Initial plans to ascend Protea Butress (F2) were put on hold due to the possibility of being caught on the exposed face in bad weather. Good enthusiasm prevents a 'cop-out' and the degeneracy of running home and watching the one day test match (SA vs. Pakistan).

Up through the myriad of paths that form a mosaic within Newlands forest, at last, the contour path, level and a good break before THE day of days. Waltzing along, a spritely spring in our step, we soon rendezvous with the cairn and forage up the lower, incredibly beautiful reaches of Hiddingh Ravine. Waterfalls of moss-covered boulders, garnished with twisted vines, tug playfully at our boots as we ascend through the indigenous forest, eternity in our sights. Shards of sunlight pierce the canopy and form fairy lights, dancing, prancing, disappearing and advancing, AWESOME! The total lack of any visible evidence of vandalism heralds praise for the natural selective climeability of difficult routes - Keep the Rabble out! Pockets of unravaged Arum Lilies grow unmolested throughout the Ravine - never to adorn the arms of some flower-seller, nor will they stand tribute to the greed of man on some forlorn street corner.

The ravine rapidly closes in, a path, to the left, but up is tricky... A cairn? Yes, let's follow it, the sketchy R.D. says traverse onto Wormhole butress via a convenient ledge, seems pretty convenient, quite exposed - should we not go higher? Green vertical fynbos climbing - roped up - tricky and slippery, what a place - exposure is mega, a real mountain route, views of the impressive vertical south facing wall of Hiddingh Butress, what's that over there? It's Ferny Dell, Looks F#\$%ing exposed!

Well, we'll have to do it next time then. Rope length after rope length of Jungle Bunny Jim climbing leads to the delicate traverse into Wormhole ravine. Our objective, the 'D' chimney leading toward salvation from this vertical 'chossy' world. Yeah, right, 45m of heinous overhanging rock, begging to be given a ticket to the scree party down below lies in wait. 'F@\$ing insane' remarks the Harris, 'Probably right' comments a bemused plank. Deliberation and procrastination take over. 'Where the F#\$% are we?' 'Is this wormhole?' 'Yes, but this is not a viable proposition in anyone's books!' 'Damn F@\$ing right it isn't' exclaims the Harris, adding 'I'm not going up there, it looks F#\$%ing difficult'.

Rereading the 1952 book (yes, this was our R.D. - not really good, like climbing blind - reminiscent of Slangolie,

except that making a mistake here would be serious - a fine line between security and safety and a terminal slide to a humus existence below) showed that we were most likely at the second fall - 'I told you that we should have gone higher up Hiddingh before traversing out', mumbles the wooden one. Defeat at hand, one last gasp effort to bypass the second 'fall' on the left ends in an overhanging wall of mild horror - descend - it's our only chance - it's very late!

Ominous clouds brood over the upper reaches of a rapidly deteriorating vibe in the chute. Descent, dejected, but we have found the traverse to Protea, at least we've recce'd the area, but the stench of failure lingers heavily in the gloom. A little enthusiasm creeps back 'let's traverse back into Hiddingh at a higher level, and see whether or not the traverse to Wormhole is at a higher level' - Good Idea. Blister bush replaces cliffortia as our best friend on these steep slopes - Heavens alive - there is only enough of it. True old alpine style climbing - roped, but walking together with coils around the body and 15m apart - sees us through to the final ramparts of Hiddingh Ravine - truly an awe-inspiring prospect. There - over there - yes, a higher level traverse? but where does it lead - the R.D. did say climbing and traversing at 'C' grade?

Well let's follow it, maybe we can even finish this darn climb today - HEY why not, we're here now - the odour of failure slips away with each vertical metre gained. 'This is a very difficult traverse to find' Yeah, our mistake is actually a great success'. SEVERAL pitches (50m each) of exposed 'C' grade climbing leads to the very steep bushy traverse into Wormhole, now alive with three Thar (Mommy, daddy and a cute youngster) and two perched black eagles, and a host of Arum lilies.

THE chimney, here it is, not long, 20m. Looooks alright?! Chris leads, grunts and groans, doesn't move, 'This is Never 'D'!' 'This is F@\$ing hard' gurgles the Harris through a mouthful of dirt, and promptly chucks his bag down. Half an hour of hell and the Harris tops out. A whoop of joy and then pack hauling chucks down a loop of rope - too far up, solo the basal parts of the chimney, reach rope, how the hell am I now going to down climb? Manage somehow. Cool, rad, superb. Tie on packs, up they go. Shit, stuck in the upper wedge, immovable, will have to climb up on a loop of rope and release them for Chris.

The following few sentences will describe the chimney (at least F2): A tricky start yields a holdless, off width crack - slimy and mossy, a thin shelf at shoulder height (on the right) is the next and only hold for the feet. No hand jams, no jugs, just a steep vertical, smooth wall, very slimy. Unbelievable contortions of the body - corkscrewing in space allow for a heel hook on this shelf. Then to step up - well, this was hell. Faint edges on the left hand wall allow the next minuscule shelf for the left foot - nothing for the right, lots of choose, lots of black mud, and lots of cursing - body bar the only way to keep from falling.



Faint light at the end of the tunnel - a jug - well in this chimney that edge was a jug - a huge jug - a veritable amphora! Grunts, groans and arm pull ups on cruddy grips, slip and slide. What's that - an old sling - about '60's, still with crab. Someone must have abbed off - sheeite, I'm still only half way! What's the rest like?

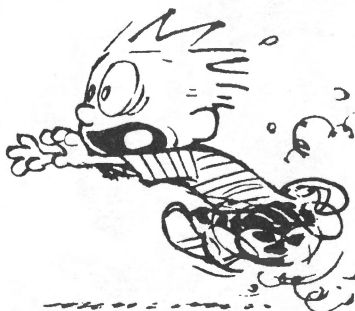
Bridging on vertical grass clods on the right and lichen covered slopes on the left gains the roof chockstone - muffled cursing releases the packs - muffled because the mouth is full of dirt, eyes completely darkened with falling grass fragments. After the packs leave, up, up and over that chockstone - what a move - must have been about F2-ish. Easy ('D') pull up and I'm up - cut, bruised, bleeding, cursed out, pumped out, black and smelly, BUT I'M UP!!!!

The R.D. says that the chimney is hardly a climbing proposition in winter - well, I'll find it difficult to be convinced to climb it again - the Harris comments 'that was not 'D', that was f@#\$ing hard' - the Harris should know! Steep slippery 'B' and 'C' climbing for about 8 rope lengths leads to the top. Great care and caution is needed as the ravine is very steep, and eroded, but the grandeur of those towering massive walls hemming us in, and our complete unbelievable existence in such an awe-inspiring world is well worth the risk.

Topping out in such a bizarre part of the mountain was greeted with thick mist and the occasional window onto lenticular clouds. Reward for the Day - well, done - gear sorted on Smut's track, Lunch Bar and biscuits - then the slog down Skeleton - it is now 18H30. The cries of Knysna warblers permeate the ever-darkening highway from Kirstenbosch to the Back Table. Pitch dark by the ladders/chains - but after what we've done, nothing is hard anymore - nice to be on such a large path! Such a safe path. A dancing Christmas light-like group of fireflies decorate the path as the survivors struggle down to the 'Bosch. Walk from the 'Bosch along the road back to the Newlands forestry station, in bed by 21H30.

**SYNOPSIS** : Wormhole is a spectacular place - beautiful beyond comprehension - even for Table Mountain. But it is a very scary place, where even the smallest error can be terminal. The upper chimney is ludicrously undergraded, and is very strenuous and difficult. An early start is necessary.

*Warwick Board*



## **ZUURBERG TRAVERSE (sort of)**

Well, it would have been a Zuurberg traverse had the weather forecaster taken dearest El Nino into account. The forecast was snow on Monday 8th so it was decided to abandon the original hike.

So certain very Cocktail-Party-hung-over members and certain other more fortunate members ended up hiking up to Hoare Hut on Saturday afternoon. On the Sunday, Dave Acott kindly woke up everyone at the delightful hour of 5:30 am to go on a pleasant day's walk to Michell's Peak via Scorpion, Tarantula and Pic Delville. We first reached Pic Delville and from there walked along the knife edge in a general Michell's Peak direction. The mist had closed in slightly, so accurate navigation was rather interesting. We came across a peak halfway between Delville and Michell's which had affectionately been named Michell's Baby by previous visitors. Soon thereafter the mist prevented further hiking and we headed back to Pic Delville for lunch. True to form as soon as we had gone back sufficiently far, the mist lifted revealing how close we had been to Michell's Peak.

We then climbed Scorpion and Tarantula and wandered back to the hut for a well-deserved supper. The evening was spent playing Crazy Eights with James (walking vending machine) Taylor kindly supplying the winners of the games with chocolate. Suggestion: always play Crazy Eights with novices (thanks Carel and Rob). Still expecting a cold front to pass through on the Monday, we decided against doing a significant day hike and ate instead. Breakfast consisted of bacon and eggs and French toast and tomatoes. An extended lunch of jaffles was eaten. Eventually at around 3pm, a few of us decided to stroll up Zeebasberg. However, this stroll did not offer sufficient exercise to burn off all those jaffles, so we hiked to Mount Superior instead. The evening brought on some more Crazy Eights and some more good food, although we needed to get to bed fairly early.

Dave once again delighted us with an early wake up call. The day's target was Mostertshoek Twins. It turned out to be a rather enjoyable, if strenuous walk/climb, with the view at the top being amazing. Then while some slept, James, Ianni and Rob conquered the smaller of the Twins. The walk back was equally enjoyable and ended with sunset from Waaihoek 12 hours after having left Hoare Hut.

On Wednesday, we consumed pancakes and waffles and then more pancakes and waffles. We walked down to the cars, where Dave and Carel sorted out their climbing gear for a frontal attempt up Zeebasberg starting from Middle Hut. The rest of us mere mortals then drove back to Cape Town.

*David Acott*

## FUNKY Leaf/ Uct Hikes

The long awaited weekend finally dawned. A chilly Saturday morning saw us (Maria Loopuyt, Ray Greenwood and I) down at Leaf College in Rondebosch loading up the UCT kombi with the Leaf group - food, backpacks, sleeping bags and more food... Yep, we were well prepared and ready to go!

The rendezvous at Bergsig (the usual spot) gave me time to go over the weekend's plans and fill Nosipho and the 9 chaps in on some Hexy history. Then off to the carpark to sort out gear and psyche up for the climb up. The front face of the mountain was shrouded by clouds and the trip started looking very interesting. Anyhow, the road is long and growing longer.... and so we set off at a cracking pace to beat the weather.

As we ascended, the skies cleared beautifully and we could see the surrounding landscape in all its' glory. The enthusiasm and energy of the group ( and maybe those Super C's ) helped us reach Point Hi in good time. There were, naturally, plenty of breaks on the way up to admire the view, catch the breath and chat about all sorts of things - from London (been there, done that) to the Gun Run.

The time at the Hut was spent well. We rested, ate, drank, rested some more, went up to the Peak for sundowners, an expose of the Slabs, a check-in at Mamakos. On this little wander, we were lucky enough to spot three shy klipspringers and plenty of rock rabbits. After all this, we ate a gourmet meal of guess what ( no prizes- tuna pasta! But with dessert ! ) and talked until late.

The next day was spent exploring the area - up to the peak behind the hut and further... while some preferred to laze in the sun ( or was that bonding with the text books?) The washing up, cleaning of the hut etc. were all done dutifully and the logbook oogled over. We took the obligatory group photos and started down. We were met by Carel Haumann on his way back from a Hex Traverse, so we swapped stories on the way down. The pool was cool and Base Hut provided a welcome break from the heat and a rest for those weary feet, before hitting the road back to city life.

This weekend was not only fantastic, because we were at the best spot in the universe, but also because of the company. Most of the Leaf students had never been on a hike before this year, let alone an overnight trip. They are very keen to learn and find out everything possible about hiking and plagued me continuously about finer points such as the height of HH, Everest etc.. huh? In return, we got a good run at practicing our Xhosa, and hearing

more about each person's hopes and dreams. I challenge you all to come on one of the Leaf hikes next year - they really are very rewarding :) !!

Anyhow, on the way home, the boys in the back, treated us all in the kombi to a freshly inspired rap about the weekend- AWESOME! We stopped off on the N1 for a lekker icecream and a reminiscence session... and then returned to the city in the fading light of sunset.

### *Rinky Vamvadelis*

#### THESE ARE A FEW QUOTES FROM THE HOARE HUT LOGBOOK, WRITTEN BY LEAF STUDENTS:

"It is very great to be in places surrounded by mountains, breathing very clean air, listening to the wind and the echoes it causes from the big rocks. I just wish I could stay here for a whole year." *Fundile Sidwell Gcagiso (Mac)*

"I never thought I would sleep on a mountain before, but here I am having supper and breakfast in the hut. It's nice to be here - no sounds of cars and radios, only the sounds of birds and the stream that I could hear. Yes! It was hard to get to the top, I must say, but I took it as it comes." *Heki*

"This has been a breathtaking experience. Being at eagle heights above the Hex River Mountains. I experienced another meaning of life, free free free!" *Thunzi*

"This trip has been very enjoyable to me. It's what I've been dreaming of all my life: to spend a night in the mountains. I guess this is the best way to get away from the fast moving town of Cape Town. I'm looking forward to coming here again." *Habo Rhalegoma*

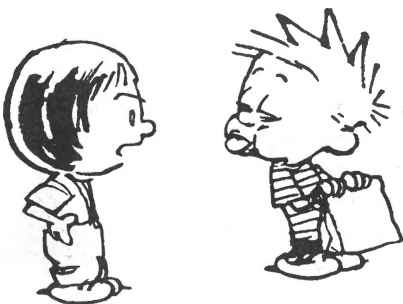
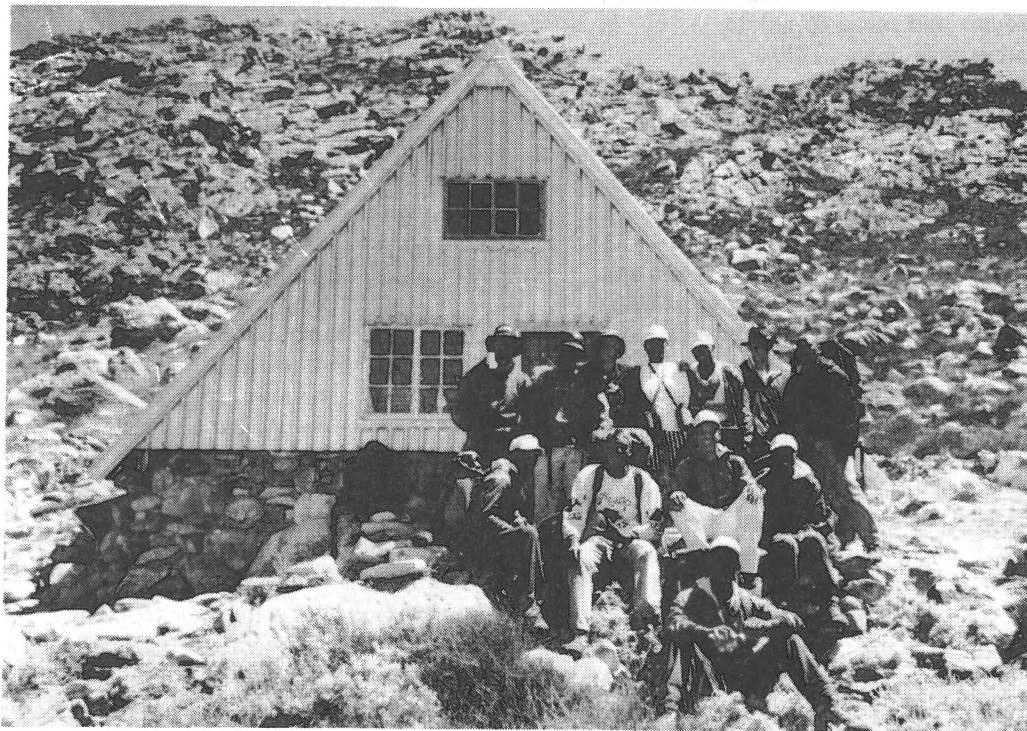
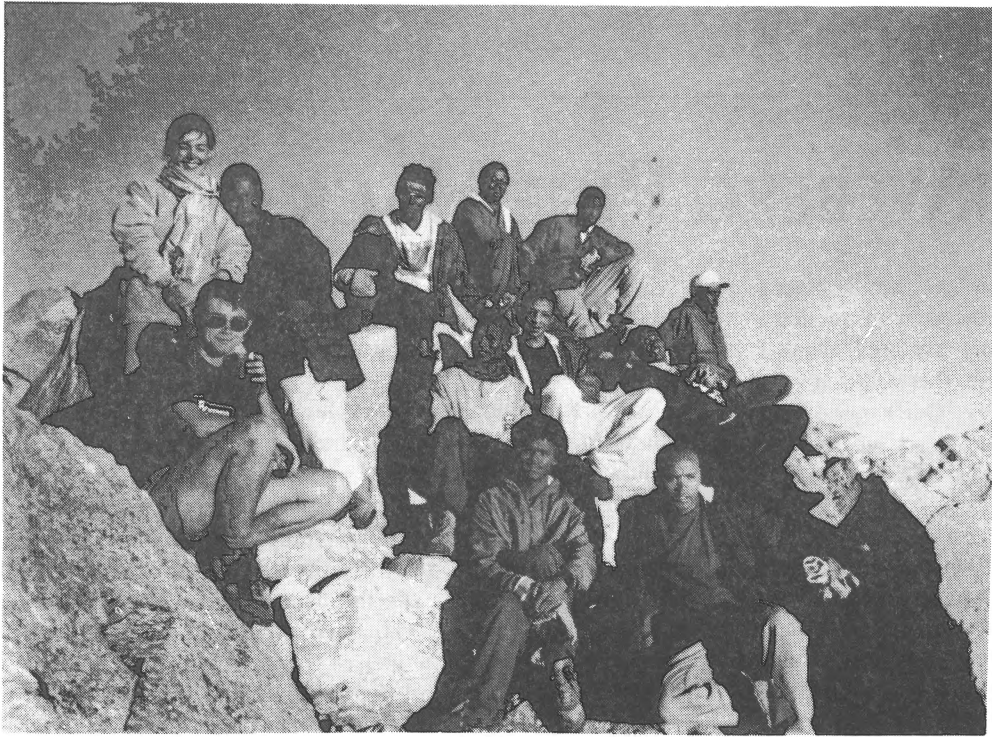
"I've been here, done everything. I've never thought of such and adventure, peace at heart, cold at night, everything except TV ( SA vs. France soccer match 11/10/97 ) - don't know the score " *Melusi*  
(CHAIRMAN OF LEAF HIKING CLUB)

"Beku mnandi ukuba lapha"  
(It sure is nice to be up here!)

*Nosipho*



PHOTO : RINKY VAMVADELIS





# SKURWEBERG PINE HACK

Sitting quietly on the verandah at my grandmother's house in Tulbagh, I am admiring the view to the north of the Winterhoek, an area I've hardly explored, when I heard a car pull up in Witzenberg Street. Pierre. No, it's the bright white 2.0ti - Axel, and Rodney. Quick good-byes and then the familiar smooth cruise to Ceres where what should we see, but a bunch of ragged looking rascals - our friends.

Another pine hack. To Merwede, car shuttling, repacking and the ever over-ambitious gear strapping session, to the sounds of initially ABBA and then Bach and Handel, issuing from Pierre's car. This being my last serious mountain trip before leaving the country, I flippantly add a fuel bottle to my pack, which already has a 6kg tent in the depths, buried beneath ridiculous food items like mielies, gem squash, mushrooms and more. Urgh! It's heavy. In fact, this pack is heavier than previous D'berg packs and I have since concluded that it's the heaviest load I've ever carried and ever shall carry. You see, I'll let you into a boring secret: I weigh under 60kg and this little pack of pure punishment therefore probably reads as a supp. or even a pass mark percentage for me.

Leaving just before noon, our trudge up the north-east slope of Skurweberg is a blessing to none, but me, for the slow pace in the face of scorching heat is just as fast as I can go with this overweight load. Upon arrival at the familiar camp, we are glad to find water and even pools just big enough to wash in. Various stages of exhaustion are exhibited by those who immediately unpack and set up tents, or quietly eat lunch in the shade, or pass out like a cold stone, on a hot rock. I decide that we won't be hacking this afternoon, like any other decision would have had a hope of being agreed upon, like the wind direction in a dust devil.

After the stomping, panting ascent, the quiet at camp is superb. Our spot is surrounded immediately by boulders of gnarled fantasy which give way to a skyline of peaks and ridges: Waaihoek, Pic Delville and the creepy crawlies in the heart of the Hex to our south, Skurweberg looming closer to the west.

Quite soon the silence is broken as the last crusaders arrive. David, James and other mega-loadbearers, broadcasting their agonizing ascent to us. David, never low on energy, soon has his 25kg scale out and begins the certification of heavy, killer and mega-mega-mother packs. Well, all respectable packs are off the scale, but us crazies are surprised as even after the removal of a tent or a chain saw, the scale is still over the limit.

It's stretched I say, but a quick check with a tent of known mass proves otherwise. Juggling figures around in our heat frazzled skulls, we come up with 33-34kg for David and

something not far off for James. Having felt their packs I now realise the terrible truth, which is that I may even have got a lower second for SKW034H!

This first evening it comes. Our first sighting is obscure and distant; the Mother Ship lurking on the horizon above Fonteintjiesberg. From now on, dare you point out any cloud, especially ovoid shaped, passing jet or shooting star, your momentary belief in the reality of these objects will quickly be ushered away by the twisted truth: a gentle murmur from Alan, "It's the Mother Ship;" a scientific declaration by James, "Quite certainly the Mother Ship;" a paternal warning from Pierre, "Look out for the Mother Ship;" a bewildered wail from Phil, "Oh no, not the Mother Ship;" and finally a demented scream from David, "It's the \$%^+{= \*! Mother Ship!!"

But then again, we have spies in our midst. Alan wears dusted maroon Klingon Commander Jacket, collar turned up; 85 galactic credits. Perfume by Sweat and Resin; makeup by Stihl. Robert tried to capture the galactic glory on film, but it got beamed up out of his camera. Even the medics amongst us, Phil and Tilman, could not recognise these classic symptoms of dehydration, sunstroke and petrol fumes. Beam them back to first year Scotty.

**DAY TWO:** serious hacking. Safety talks. Historic yap from a rock overlooking the amphitheater of operations: 2.5 years ago. 25 Pierre. 25 hectic bush, .25 the General, blah. 25 Andrew Lewis and 1.25 bla bla, yap, Axel, Torben. 25 rained out, blah. 25 yap yap, blah blah, etcetera. Descend to the amphitheater. We're equipped to massacre with loppers, bow saws and 5 chain saws. Five chain saws. 25 Aaaction! And so Jerrob's borrowed Husqvarna is blunt enough to floss your teeth with, one of the 034's is blunt, Pierre bends the bar on the other 034 and the fuel tank gets cracked on a brand new 026 (less than 1000 tree rings on the clock). By lunch! Five to one, one in five, no chain saw makes it out of here alive.

The second evening we gather in a circle and partake of David's legendary thick custard - stomach glue. "If you don't like it, stop complaining and STOP eating it!" At least it shuts people like me up for a while. The hard core on this hack are not chainsaw cowboys, but rather those who add the ultimate condiment to their custard - mole-asses! Yum! 7000022 kilojoules.

**DAY THREE.** Misty. A beautiful quietness envelops the camp as we are surrounded by thick cloud with a somber light. Low visibility in this, our private universe, a few sandstone boulders and some fynbos. Behind the cloud of course are the huge featureless walls of the loading bay aboard the Mother Ship. Prisoners in an illusion. The Hex is a hoax.



## GROOT WINTERHOEK WILDERNESS

Slow morning; rooibos tea, mole-asses and ethanol - breakfast boogie! Cloud clears. Action! And the sun comes out: "I'm walkin' on sunshine, whoa-oh, Time to feel good." Here's a classic cut: walk up to the tree, snap off low dead branches, clear loose rocks and undergrowth; check tree for lean; assess wind if any; make decision. Pull off chain guard, goggles on, drop start and rev saw into life; pull throttle full and into bottom cut of wedge, drag nose through evenly, pull out and slam in for the top cut, hold it in, drag the nose and pop - wedge flicks free and onto the ground. Last glance up at the tree while saw idles, then full revs and whack it in for the back cut; move round slowly and stay parallel at the end and .25back cut opens up. Whip the saw out and shut off, pull goggles off and watch the show. Back cut opens up slowly at first as the tree tears and cracks, leaning into the wedge. Suddenly, ripping, it snaps free and launches into space like a javelin, air whooshing through its leaves and lands on the slope with a thud you feel and a crash that echoes around off the cliffs.

**DAY FOUR.** More hacking. Up to camp, pack up, down the mountain, into Ceres, back to Cape Town. Driving back on the N1, a deep sense of satisfaction creates an inner warmth which matches the outer warmth from four days of sun and wind on my skin. And in the sky is a magnificent burst of magenta - an atomic sunset - somewhere west of us, over the Atlantic Ocean, the Mother Ship has just exploded.

But wait: a final thought. Slumped quietly on a rock below the cliffs of Skurweberg and just west of its amphitheatre, I look up the Witels Valley to the giant peaks. I absorb the scene: a dotted trail of colour winds its way up, draining back to camp through the green and grey, long shadows caress the slope; soon this arena, this dramatic playground, or stage, if you like, will be empty of humans. I'm not thinking much, but, 'Wow, I'm tired. Really tired, but I'll be fine in a moment. I'll just enjoy it. I'll just sit here and be content. Happy. This is it, for me. To be here, with all these people, so young, lively, keen; volunteers together - one goal, maybe even one vision. I like this, my life. This is it. I'll be back.' Beam me up Scotty. No Scotty, I didn't say Perth. You idiot! Now I've got to get back to South Africa.

LEADER : DAVID ACOTT

*Roger ♦ Diamond*



DEALING WITH THE ALIENS

Four bleary eyed, but enthusiastic mountaineers assembled at the chilly, dark hour of five to make a fitting start to an epic experience. This, however, did not last long, as one by one, three of us faded back into dreamland, as we sped along to the object of our adventure.

With sun tan cream and packs donned, we meandered our way, to the tune of Scout Songs, across the valley towards the mountains that encircle the paradise we would enjoy for two days. No sooner had our over-confidence lead us to praise our exceptional route-following skills, than fate decided to teach us a lesson, and we began the first of many bundu bashes in search of the path. Credit, however, has to be given to Paul, who, unlike the rest of us, avoided this blunder.

We descended into and crossed a 'superb' grass filled valley, before our partly split into a hard core component (who took the direct route over a minor peak to the hut,) and the second component (who erroneously decided that skirting the peak would prove to be an intelligent option). Needless to say, the second component eventually arrived at the hut cursing their decision. After a much awaited lunch and a quick snooze in the sun, we dumped our packs and headed with high spirits for the Groot Winterhoek peak. After a substantial time ploughing through a large patch of thick, thorny, dark, Renoster fynbos, we came upon a DEEP valley which lay between us and the peak. This, however, did not deter us, and we decided to traverse across the spurs until we reached the base of the peak. After a number of spurs had been crossed, and the sun started to sink a little, a certain bottle of red wine back at the hut began calling to us convincingly, so we basked in the sun and played cricket dice for a while, before heading back to supper and a glass of good wine, leaving the peak for another day.

The next day, we ambled back along the river and past some incredibly beautiful pools. Warwick's weekend was made when we finally came upon a much searched for Cape Rock Jumper, and were graced by the presence of a pair of Black eagles. After a long, hot walk, the car was a welcome site, but a sad reminder that our time in paradise was over for a time.

Any account of the hike would, however, not be complete without mentioning Paul's never ending supply of frizzers. These supplied much-needed energy and an outlet for creative expression, resulting in an array of contorted forms.

LEADER : WARWICK BOARD

*Maria Loopuyt*

## Du Toit's Peak via Yellowwood Amphitheatre

This hike has some inept ability to leach the most interesting of people from the woodwork of the club. So it was on my first trip, and again on this trip.

I arrived at the Information Centre at 05h00 on a Wednesday morning with the stinging smell of a coastal fog permeating the crisp pre-dawn air, not knowing whether there would be any hike for me to lead. I had been asked to lead it on the Monday before, and only knew of one person who was a definite. To my pleasant surprise, three people were awaiting my presence - one having played chess (largely unsuccessfully) against our Skiing Convenor until just two hours before, and had had what minimal sleep possible in his car.

Before the sun had made any thoughts of cutting the chill, we were well on our way, following the streak of headlights on the N1. We exited the Huguenot tunnel just before six, with the Du Toit's and Witteberg mountains authoritatively peering down at us, making us realise just how each of us is in the grand scheme of things. Having done this hike only once before (May 1996), I had to take an informed guess as to its' starting point (which is just an arbitrary point on the N1), while keeping the others' confidence in me intact!

A lucky guess and some minutes' preparation later we were putting one foot in front of the other, as is traditional when hiking, and making our way towards the 'Yellowwood Amphitheatre'. The small group was seemingly undeterred by gravity or other factors, and before my awakening reactions had time to absorb the events, we had witnessed the shortening of shadows as that orb began its daily visit, had made the base of the cliffs and veered right to begin the traverse whose exposure and splendour make the grandeur of the route. (Unfortunately, I misjudged the altitude we needed to gain in order to escape the traverse via the only visibly viable break, and we ended up doing some scrambling which, combined with the exposure, raised one or two hairs on the back of the neck. It all adds to the exhilaration of life, I suppose.)

Leaving the traverse leads to greatly different views: from the wonders of Slanghoek, Limietberge, with the Cedarberg and Winterhoek ranges in the distance, one is now treated to appreciating the Hex, Wemmershoek and more southerly ranges. Just past the neck of exit, out of the funneling wind, the four of us had our first marked break.

From here, the route glides around the dip slopes of Du Toit's Peak for a couple of hours, crossing two substantial gorges before summiting. At the first of these gorges, we found water, and took another extended break. It was

around this stage that we thought that the hike was more extreme for its' breaks than its' walking.

At least, this seemed to be the impression. 'Speedy' Steve, our wits import who seemed keen on bagging the peak and getting to the cars in a time which would have made the Road Runner green from envious. Having typically Cape relaxed attitudes, we appreciated the softer moments of the hike as well.

'We' were Alastair Sellick and Nick Price, two special members who vied for last place whilst [bullshitting], and myself.

After reaching the second gully, and despondently sacrificing hard fought-for altitude, we completed the final slog (and this section is just a slog) to the beacon on top at 13h30, whereupon we lunched. Lunch was interesting, being merely a pooled effort between the four of us. The full-circle panorama from here was much appreciated (especially by Alastair and his numerous photographic accessories). Particularly satisfying was scattered cloud extending from the Wemmershoek range west, with Simonsberg occasionally offering glimpses of herself, but for the rest, all was cloudy. We all felt a certain sense of superiority over those who thought they were unable to complete the early morning start, and were now stuck in a cloudy Cape Town.

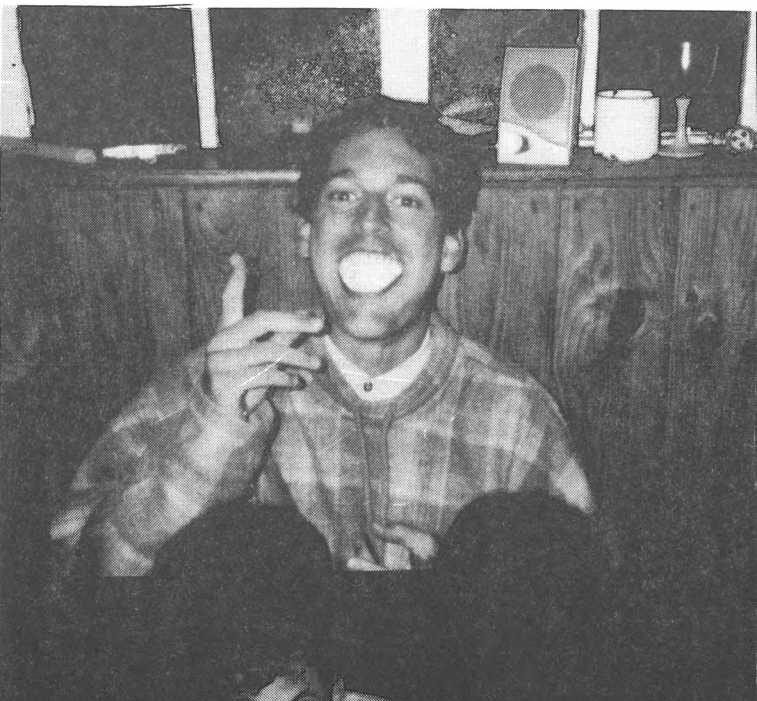
Lunch was leisurely concluded sometime between 14h30 and 15h00, and from here the route was fairly straightforward, being the traditional ascent route for the peak. For one, there was a path, and secondly, there is only one possible line on the westward-bearing ridge. The highlight of the trip now being over, we put our heads down and pressed ahead as fast as legs (which were beginning to ail) could carry us, in order to make the most of daylight. The path follows the ridge until it abruptly ends, then making a not-so-shallow descent next to an impressive tower of rock, often referred to as the Gendarme (pronunciation queries to Alastair). From here, we made some error and ended up wandering through apple orchards (I knew we weren't meant, and probably weren't allowed to be in) before completing our journey to the N1 by some bundu-bashing and fence-hopping.

Having only taken one vehicle, hitch-hiking was needed to return to where it had been left temporarily abandoned in the side of the N1. Alastair and I decided to test the temperatures of the Molenaars River, while Nick and Steve collected the car. When they arrived, we hopped into the car, now fresh and relaxed (unlike them) and were told of their hitching lift - with a DEAF person! (communication was, apparently, interesting).

We returned to UCT in the final gasps of a magnificent day, thoroughly grateful for the energy put into getting up just that much earlier.

*David Acott*





## Who was here before us?

# The understanding, appreciation and conservation of archaeology sites that we discover on our wanderings.

I have been a member of the Mountain and Ski Club for two years and in that time I have often been confronted by the need to explain any archaeology site that my fellow mountaineers and I come across on our wanderings about South Africa. Rock paintings were studied on our trip up Baboon Peak and there are reportedly some up Jan Du Toits Kloof in the Heavenly Hex. Peer's Cave in the Cape Province is one site with which the climbers in our club are well aquatinted.

There are a few questions which I am always asked by people when the topic of archaeology is raised:

1. *What is archaeology?*
2. *Aren't all archaeological sites historical, what is the difference between historical and prehistorical sites?*
3. *If I come across an archaeological site what should I do, and what shouldn't I do?*

1. "Archaeology is a method for studying the traces that people leave behind, whether this be a cave, a shell midden, a mud hut, a municipal rubbish dump, a battlefield, a mansion or an office block. If a site is well preserved and professionally excavated, a great deal of information about our past history and culture can be obtained that is not available through any other source."<sup>1</sup>
2. "An historical site is defined by the National Monuments Act as 'any identifiable building or part thereof, marker, milestone, gravestone, landmark or tell older than fifty years'"<sup>2</sup>. Prehistorical generally applies to sites, which date to periods when written records were not available. Historical is generally used by many people as referring to times after colonial contact or for periods from which written records are available. For example, the Castle in Cape Town would be termed a historical site and Peer's Cave a prehistorical site.
3. Archaeological sites provide information about past cultures, in a variety of forms and should be respected since they cannot be renewed like some parts of our natural environment. The reason for conserving our natural environment, as I see it, is that it is beautiful and rare and if it is lost, the world would be a poorer place without it. The reason, perhaps that, Roger cuts down pine trees is not so much that he enjoys the power and sound of the chain saw, but because this will allow the indigenous plants to flourish and survive. In the same

vein. I see archaeology sites as important, because they provide unrenewable information about our past. If they are destroyed they can never be replaced and we would have lost something precious. We define who we are by our knowledge of our past. Everyone in our country at the moment is going through this process. Archaeology helps contribute to our knowledge of the past and so will always have a place in our lives.

Therefore, if you come across an archaeological site, treat it with the respect it deserves. Respect it as you would a rare bird or flower. Don't throw water or build a fire or touch rock paintings. Don't deface any site in anyway. The rock paintings in Peer's Cave could date to from 100 000 years ago and the deposit at the bottom of the shelter in some, places could be this old. Don't remove any archaeological artifact - this could be a clay pipe, a stone tool, a piece of pottery etc. from a site. When one does this the object is out of context and can tell the archaeologist nothing about where it came from and the age or history of the object would be impossible to determine. If you find a site mark it's place clearly on a map and then tell an archaeologist at the university or museum about it, so that it can be properly documented. It is no longer seen as necessary to excavate every archaeological site that is documented. There is plenty of information already gained and excavated to study and understand in increasingly different ways. Archaeology does not stand on its own, also important are the interactions between archaeologists and social anthropologists, geologists, geomorphologists, paleontologists, etc.

I hope I have managed to answer most of the questions that would be asked if you come across a archaeology site. If you want to find any, just look around you. The Castle is one, there are numerous shipwrecks off the coast of the peninsula, there are rock paintings all over our Cape mountains, many of the buildings in the central Cape Town are National Monuments. The South African Museum and the Cultural History Museum will provide lots of information about excavated sites and about archaeology in general.





In fact the Cultural History Museum used to be the slave lodge for company slaves at the Cape before they were emancipated in 1834. As a final example, the white walled graveyard above Woolsack drive, Mostert's Mill and the present Public Relations Building (Welgelegen) were all part of a farm named Welgelegen that was first granted as just a piece of land with no building to Cornelis Stevensz Botma in 1676. The mill and building were built by other owners later. Cecil John Rhodes obtained the farm in 1890.

If you need any more information, don't hesitate to contact me, the Archaeology Department at UCT or the South African Museum.

<sup>1,2</sup>In answering these questions, I used information gained from booklets produced by the National Monuments Council. If anyone wants these booklets all they need do is write to The National Monuments Council, PO Box 4637, Cape Town, 8000 or phone: (021) 462 4502. There are also branches in Grahamstown, Pietermaritzburg, Kimberley, Bloemfontein and Pretoria.

Emma Sealy



佛陀在一部經中說了如下一則寓言：一個人在荒野經過，碰到了一頭老虎，於是他拼命逃跑，但那老虎却緊追不捨。他跑到一處懸崖之上，以兩手攀著一根野藤，讓全身懸在半空中搖盪。他抬頭仰望，只見那頭老虎向他怒吼，向下去看，又見遠遠的下方有另一頭老虎張著血盆大口在等著他。這使他膽戰心驚，顫抖不已，而他只有一條枯藤可以繫藤。

就在此時，又有一隻白鼠和一隻黑鼠，正一點一點地啃蝕那條枯藤。但他忽見附近有粒鮮美的草莓，於是他以一手攀藤，以另一手去採草莓，他將它送入口中，嚐了一下：味道好美呀！





## A REVIEW OF PINE HACKS ON ZUURBERG IN THE 1990's

One of the most valuable functions of mountaineering journals, besides entertaining the readership, is that of recording accounts of expeditions of discovery into remote and unknown areas, providing details of places, people, routes and activities. Articles of this nature serve to guide and inspire future generations as well as to remind the participants of the adventures of the past. It is my aim here to consolidate my knowledge of the remarkable history of pine hacks on Zuurberg in the 1990's.

The indisputable importance of removing invasive alien vegetation, especially *Pinus Pinaster*, and the hardship and suffering that go along with the high adventure and camaraderie is well documented in past Club journals (refer particularly to articles by Roger Diamond 1995, Dirk Swart 1995 & Dietmar Lingel 1990). This immensely rewarding activity seems to be restricted to a relative few 'hard core' men and women who receive no compensation and little recognition outside of the hacking community, but who play an invaluable role in conservation. Most people attend only a single hack and I classify those with three or more to his/her name as veterans. The nature of hacks is probably best summed up by a statement by Paul Leroy that 'unlike conventional hikes, pine hacks have little to do with fitness but a lot to do with suffering'.

There are generally three eras of hacks that I can identify:

**Pre-1990's:** There is ample evidence from past club journals that as early as 1963 the serious problem of pine infestations and other alien species had already been identified. The first hacks on Zuurberg were undertaken by the MCSA in Middle Valley starting in 1972. In 1975 the threat of alien vegetation (including Black Wattle in the Witels Kloof) was again highlighted. The hacks appear to have been somewhat discontinuous and there are records of further pine hacks in the Witels Basin in 1984. In the late 1980's the Club even invested in a chainsaw indicating the serious intention of the committee. But until the Club borrowed the MCSA chainsaws a number of years later, this single Club saw hardly made a dent on the problem! Lumberjacks such as 'Shredder' (Greg) Shroeder, 'Hagar' Agar, and 'Evergreen' (Andy) Heathcote-Marks did valuable work in the huge forested areas of Middle Valley above The Alder Ring. Jim Baxter tried to motivate people, but with little success in getting support from club members. This can clearly be seen in the pages of a 1990 journal article by Dietmar Lingel who urged members: 'We need to become less selfish, we must be prepared to be willing to sacrifice some of our free time in order to put work into maintaining the mountains'. After this it was Neil McPhail who got the ball rolling in a big way and motivated many people including Axel Holscha. Neil organised the first big hack that approached Bertsberg from Adderly Street just above the Rooiwater Waterfall.

Besides the recorded hacks in Middle Valley there is hard evidence, in the form of very old, sizeable felled trees, of some excellent work done on the ridge between Skurweberg and Bertsberg. The hacks here appear to have been limited to the top of the ridge; the people involved were no doubt daunted by the scale of the forests below them to the south and on the northern slopes of Mitchell's Peak.

**Early 1990's, The Axel Holscha Era:** Axel (a truly appropriate name for a hacker) was certainly the driving force in the early 1990's in which he motivated and led almost all the hacks in this period. He became legendary in his sheer ability with a chainsaw and his Herculean non-stop hacking once he got going. In 1991 Axel led a small group of people to explore a way into the area below Bertsberg. He established a route starting from the dam above Kweperfontein, up Adderly Street, across the Skurweberg Saddle to just south of and below the upper cliffs of Bertsberg, and then down the very steep slopes towards the shelf above the Witels.

This period was characterised by far greater member participation and a number of mass hacks were very successful in clearing most of the larger trees on the lower southern slopes of Bertsberg between Breakfast/Whiskey Camp and Bushwhack Camp. Often students were enticed by the club advertising hacks as a means to relieve post-exam stress in which you could take out your frustrations on defenceless pines. Another characteristic of this period was the lack of safety measures, with hacking occurring in a very casual manner. Although chainsaw operators used full head safety gear - hard hat, goggles ear protection (which is not done anymore - why?), it was not until 1992 that the first safety training courses, given by Philip le Roux of Kirstenbosch, were held.

Most of the trees in the vicinity of Bertsberg were suitable for chainsaws and the forests were often so dense that the saws could be left idling while the operator moved between trees. Unfortunately many of the larger trees on the cliffs of Bertsberg were left due to the shortage of manpower resources and the dangerous positions of the trees. Once this area had been cleared the general location of the hacks moved to Middle Valley, using The Alder Ring campsite on the Witels as a base. As in the pre-1990's era the vast forests high up on the western slopes of the Witels were tackled.

On one of these hacks in 1992 a freak accident occurred in which a club member, 5th year medical student Cathy Mallory, fell over a ledge along with a pine tree, resulting in permanent paralysis from the waist down.





PHOTO : RAY GREENWOOD

A heroic rescue swung into action with Axel and another person racing to raise the alarm at the Kweperfontein farmstead. An unprecedented night-time helicopter evacuation was performed with club members indicating to the helicopter the location of the accident by burning petrol from the chainsaws. An indication of the roughness of the terrain is that the doctor took half an hour from where he was dropped to reach the scene of the accident.

Mid 1990's, The Pierre Hoffa & Roger Diamond Era: **[\*\*BOLD\*\*]** Not surprisingly the Axel Holscha era was now over. Safety was now an important issue and clearer cutting strategies were implemented to improve safety and to refine the co-operation between chainsaw and bowsaw operators, thereby reducing the possibility of missing saplings. [Roger Diamond's ability to detect saplings 1 year old and younger, in thick fynbos, became legendary.]

A very successful follow up hack was held in Easter 1994 in the same area as the accident with 12 men and 1 real man (Brandon Hurd) using The Alder Ring as a base. While I led a small group to explore and eliminate isolated trees on the slopes north west of The Alder Ring, Rob Jones led the bulk of the people to the large forest high up on the slopes south west of the campsite but north of the Waaihoek Basin. The results of all the years work on this

large forest paid off and this hack managed in clearing the remaining trees with some guys reaching spot height 1201. This hack was characterised by extreme heat and shortage of water at the forest and was worsened by the necessity of climbing over endless valleys of dead and dying trees to reach the surviving ones. The water situation was so serious that Rob issued a directive stating that anyone who urinated would receive no more water rations. Epic hackers such as Andrew Lewis, Andrew Ward and Roger Diamond all made names for their daring and crazy feats. [Andrew Lewis was witnessed to have felled a tree merely by revving a chainsaw next to it.] On the basis on my exploring I identified the basin below Skurweberg as a much needed area for future hacks. The problem was that nobody in the club knew of any way into this area, and the cliffs to the north appeared impenetrable for a party carrying hacking gear.

So it was that in September 1994 I led a group consisting of Brandon Hurd, Torben Wiborg and Ray Greenwood to explore a route over into this basin. We started at the farm Merwede and made our way over very rough terrain to a neck east of Skurweberg where we established camp (what I call the Skurweberg Neck Camp). We faced searing heat, followed by a spectacular thunderstorm and rain, but managed to discover a route down into the basin (since then many such routes have been established). Another result of this exploration was the identification of the northern slopes of Mitchell's Peak as a region that required much attention. This was going to be a problem due to the inaccessibility of the slopes. There was literally no practical way in over land.

The September hack was followed up by a mass post November exam hack setting a precedent for large numbers of men and women taking part. On this occasion we entered via the new route, but instead of camping at the neck we went on to camp on the broad shelf above and at the edge of the Witels (between Swim 3 and Mango's Camp). The hack concentrated on the lower basin, often in areas of very dense bush, with that just above the Triple Ledge Falls becoming known as 'Vietnam'. A feature of the hack was the ringbarking of 'The General' a monster pine similar in size to a typical Rhodes Memorial pine (so large in fact that it can easily be seen on the 1:10000 Orthophoto Map as well as from high altitude aircraft to and from Johannesburg) - too much for our small little chainsaws. It was here that Roger Diamond coined military terminology for all of the trees (see the 1995 Journal). The General took well over 2 years to finally die - a standing memorial to the eventual victory of the forces of good. Jenny Greenwood and Jacqui Lighton, now both veterans, also played a crucial role and often struggled with the best of the men to hack down very large trees using bowsaws. Jenny and Conrad Vermeulen, in a later hack, proved their passionate hatred for the trees by accompanying me on a 5 hour epic mission to get a single large tree in a very prominent position overlooking the Witels.



When I suggested to the club committee my dreams of getting to the large forests on the northern slopes of Mitchell's peak with the aid of a helicopter, most people laughed thinking that this was merely a pipe dream. However I discussed this with Lester Coelen of the rescue section of the MCSA about the possibility of getting the Air Force to assist us. Both he and the Air Force were remarkably enthusiastic and this resulted in the first Heli-pine hack in late November 1994, making use of an Oryx to airlift the whole group, our gear, saws, fuel and half a ton of water into this harsh and remote region. This was particularly successful and was followed up by similar hacks in 1995 & 1996, all on the same slopes. In fact on the 1996 hack some of the group cleared right up to the summit of Mitchell's Peak itself. These hacks were used by the Air Force as essential mountain training for their pilots. During the 1994 heli-hack the forest along side the River Delville was named 'Delville Wood'. [Remember the legendary World War One battle in which a South African force successfully held off a sustained German offensive.] I am not sure if the naming of this forest was based on the common scenes of devastation after both battles or actually named after the river.

Since 1994 all of the walk-in hacks have been concentrated in the Skurweberg basin and based at the Skurweberg Neck Campsite. Huge success has been achieved and almost all the trees have been cleared from this region (maybe two more hacks are necessary to complete the task). This basin area has been a massive exercise in gradual and systematic clearing of both saplings and large trees in some of the most rugged areas imaginable.

The battle against the invasive pines continues with renewed determination by the new generation of club members. Of course there will always be the problem of the seed bank and trees on inaccessible cliffs or in positions far to remote to get to. Until a biological control is developed and released (which is unlikely) we will almost certainly never reach a total solution, however all the years of slow and seemingly hopeless toil have paid off. The

pinus are now under control (with all of the last forests having been felled), but continuing effort is required to ensure that large forests never become a feature of the Zuurberg landscape again.

While we are doing fantastic work on our property the neighbouring Ceres Mountain Fynbos Reserve is infested with pines, and to my knowledge nothing is being done to address this problem. In particular are the immense forests in almost completely inaccessible areas around Castle Rocks and the north western slopes of Mitchell's Peak. Since pines do not respect 'imaginary' property boundaries these regions of infestation are a serious cause of concern. But with limited manpower resources and the vastness of Zuurberg the club has to prioritise and concentrate on its property. [Quite ironically, but thankfully, the land to the east of Zuurberg which is classified as State Forest, is almost totally in its natural state and is devoid of any form of tree.]

Pine hacking has grown to be a considerable element of the club and its activities. It has reached almost a cult status which is partly reflected in the abundance of pine hack articles in this journal. Hacking is without doubt one of the best ways to explore, learn about and gain respect for the Hex River Mountains. There is little reason to visit many, if not all, of the areas in which hacks take place, were it not for the location of the trees. These areas being some of the most harsh and rugged you are likely to ever find. Looking back on the 11 hacks that I have been on since 1991 remarkable progress has been made due to hard work (and suffering) of countless club members whose exploits are unrecorded and whose only rewards are personal satisfaction.

*Pierre Hoffa*



PHOTO : JAMES CULLIS

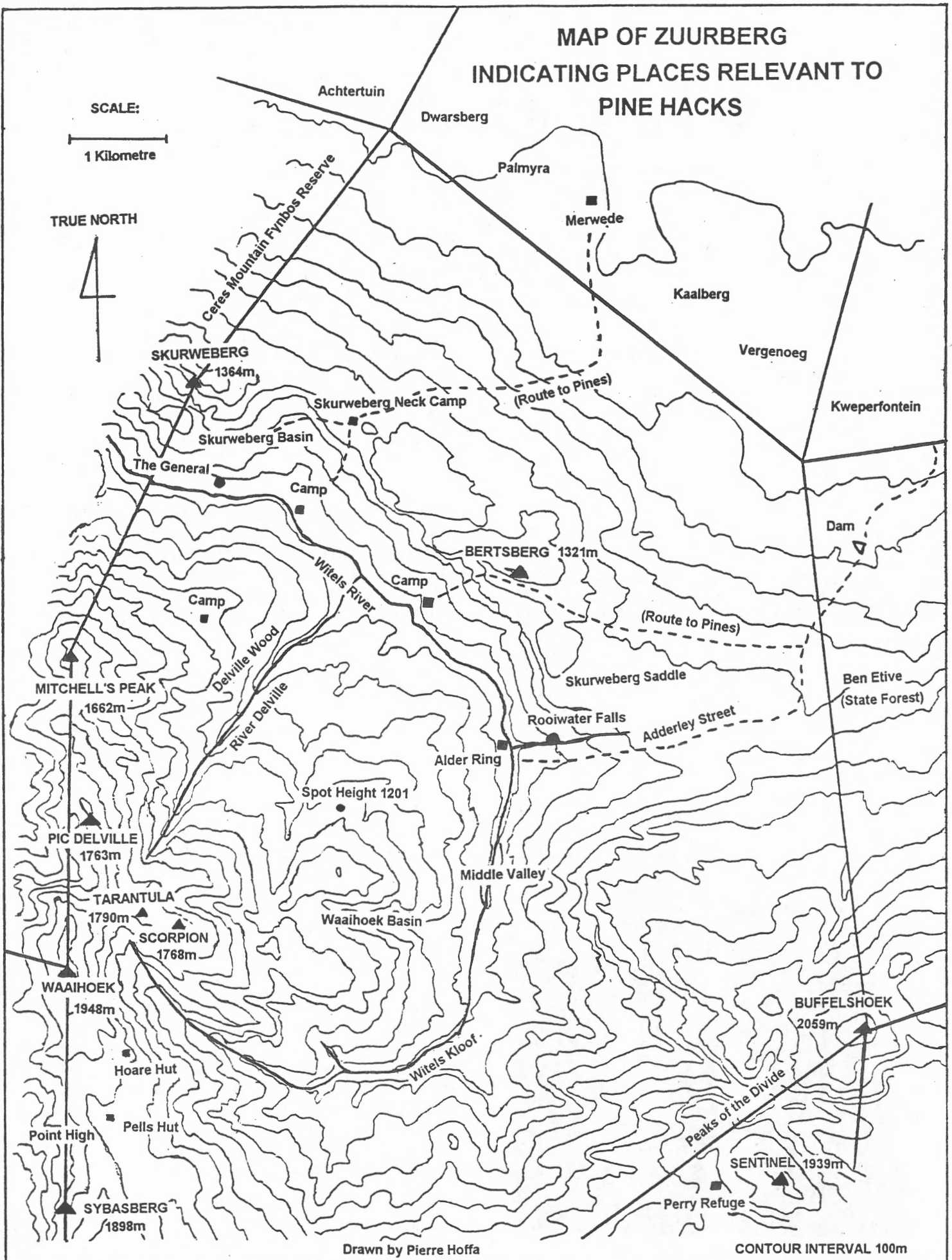


# MAP OF ZUURBERG INDICATING PLACES RELEVANT TO PINE HACKS

SCALE:

1 Kilometre

TRUE NORTH





# h ha Hack Hackers

Take the corner in third and then accelerate full bore through to fifth and get up to about a hundred, which smoothes the bumps out very nicely. Take the corner eighty to ninety, only because the clay is hard and dry, back up to a hundred past the dumps, but keep an eye out for road trains carrying ore, and then take the final corner in third and bounce on disgusting ruts and holes the final hundred metres back to the Transvaal Mine Office.

Another day in the outback bush hanging around drill rigs and looking at rocks. Hop out of the Landcruiser and walk across the dry clay and into the offices. Put my bags down at my desk and "Oh, what's that?" A form with my name in a list and highlighter over my name, is lying on my desk. Well, well, well, they've put me down for a chainsaw course. Huh, that'll be a laugh. No, actually, let's not be a superhero here, let's go in and see what I can learn.

Ra Ra Ra, and some field assistants say they are upset that they're not included on the course - I say, "Hey, you can

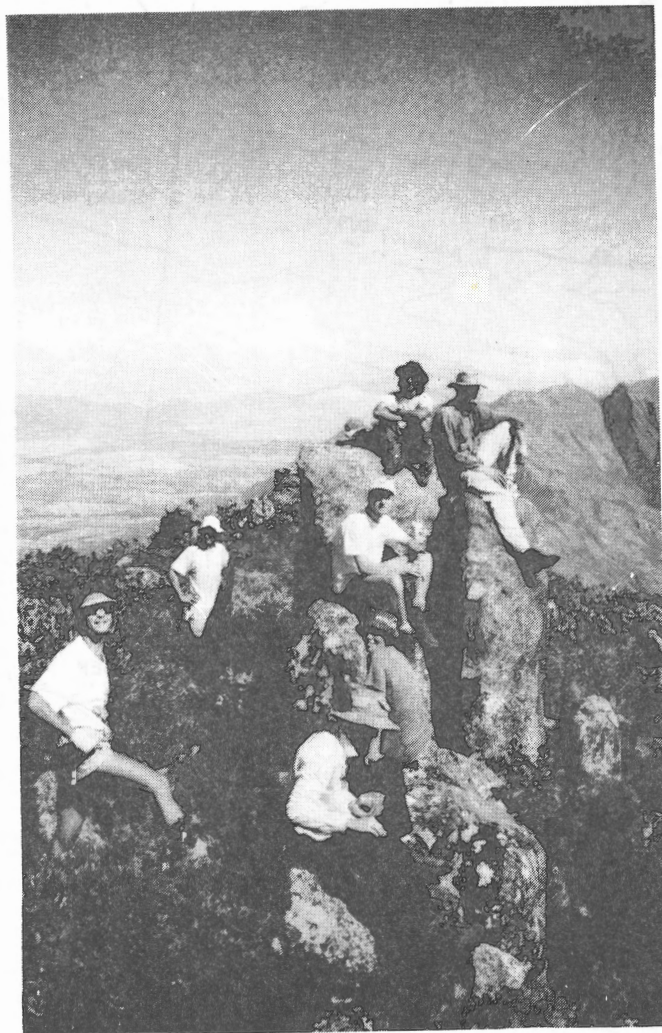


PHOTO : JAMES CULLIS

take my place, really because I don't have my driver's license number to quote on the police clearance form which is needed before we can go onto the mine site where they're having the course, in turn because my moonbag of goodies (wallet, etc.) was stolen." So the boss, Fil, asks me if I really don't mind the field assistants taking my place - I suppose he was just thinking that maybe I'm a bit scared to learn how to use a chain saw, being such a petite, considerate little guy who never makes much noise - you know stuff like farting and burping as loud as possible and F%\$\*!~ this and F\_(^%# that! So I get up, and Steve, another geologist, is standing there at the time, when I say to Fil "No, I really don't mind, I know how to use one." The looks of mild uncertainty that are returned to me prompt me to say "Ah, ja, I've actually used one quite a bit."

**BLOODY HELL: WHAT I REALLY WANTED TO SAY WAS THAT IF THEY GAVE ME ENOUGH OIL-PETROL MIX AND SUNCREAM, WITH A CHAINSAW I COULD BLOODY WELL MINE THE GOLD OUT OF THE GROUND THERE AND THEN AND MILL THE STUFF TOO, mind you I might struggle a little with a Husqvarna! :)**

Just to round off the story, I asked Jaxon what the course was like and he said that they spent the entire morning in the office learning about history and operation and only spent an hour or two outside cutting felled logs and the only reasonable tree was cut just in a demonstration by the instructor. He he he...little boys and girls, come to Skurweberg: IF YOU SURVIVE...

1. *the Cape Town factor; beaches and babes and boys*
2. *the road factor; black taxis in the city and Ceres cops at 160 on Michell's Pass*
3. *the Hoffa factor; ABBA blaring from Pierre's car*
4. *the Axel factor; 30kg+*
5. *the Andrew Lewis factor; epic*
6. *the Taylor factor; the mother ship*
7. *the Acott factor; custard glue.*

Out here, having pretty good fun as I am, especially considering I'm being paid for it, with big bucks everywhere, lots of noise and action with drill rigs, open pits, little underground operations, fancy computers and expensive stuff like aeromagnetic data and air photos, nothing comes close to the experience of a pine hack. Even that feeling of getting a tiny sapling, still one stalk with needles radiating out. It's a passionate existence in the hellish heaven of the Hex.

From the flat earth of Southern Cross, Western Australia...live with passion.

**Roger Diamond**



## WHO NEEDS AN R.D. ANYWAY?

It's a conspiracy - the two of us - in the Geo-office, plotting, planning and dreaming - Slangolie frontal? Looks do-able, looks O.K., but where are the R.D.'s? "Just follow the beacons, mind you there weren't that many" says our one climbing Doctor. "Remember to bear right at the top, or was it left?" Thanks Doc, that'll help us! What and where is the crux? "F2, I think, but it's difficult to say exactly where it is." "Essentially, follow the frontal ridge all the way, stay on the arete and you won't go far wrong, get an early start, it's a long climb". So the scene is set, we have no R.D., we have no clue as to the crux, and we must leave early, for the climb is over 300m - the longest trad. climb on T.M.

Wednesday dawns bright and early, a stunningly clear day, in the midst of promised foul weather. Our luck, we'll do it yet, the fulfillment of a dream, and the Diamond's swansong in the mountains of the Cape, come to think of it, in the mountains of Africa.

09H00 start is delayed by the Diamond. Where is he? The usual pre-climb nerves set in, we'll never make it, it's late, we'll do a shorter route, we'll go sport climbing instead! No, the carbon polymorph arrives and its all feet and boots, rucksacks and gear as the green machine hotfoots it across the Peninsula to Theresa Avenue.

A long walk-in from Porcupine Buttress, along the contour path through the eroded Slangolie Ravine (more like a rock chute) and we arrive. The frontal arete soars up above us like a colossal column, impenetrable, imposing, intimidating, inspiring.

Roped up and the pitches start to fly, generally well beaconed, with consistant grades E2 (10), E3(11), F1(12/13/14) and a mixture of them throughout. Soon whoever is leading becomes lost from the second's view in a towering spire of rock, soaring upwards, exposure is extreme, the stances small. Oh what a wall!

Progress is measured by the sun (we have no watches), and by the height gain relative to Corridor Buttress to the south. We still have a long way to go! An awkward overhanging crack (F2/15) leads towards more vertical ground, before a chossy squeal-like-a-piggy chimney (F2/15) leads to more broken ground. The arete stretches on and on forever upward into the afternoon sky. We are mere points on an infinite plane of grey rock, vertical or horizontal, it matters not, the brain has adjusted.

A tiny stance for lunch, what a view, what a day, what a place. Upwards for 50m to the crest! Yes, yes, no!, just the end of the main arete, just two-thirds of the way up. Time is running out, the sun will set soon. Beacons become rare, the brief respite in the angle of the slope is over, it is vertical once again, and hard. The climbing rate increases,

a race against time, can't be benighted, we don't know what's coming, more F2/15? Yes, indeed.

An awkward chimney, followed by a wicked pull over a smooth chockstone (F3?) and then a thin technical balance-eye face - we're off route! Night sets in. Where is the top? Another rise, another arete piercing the network of stars, the angle lessens, we unrope, quicker that way, no this, B/C to the top? Let's hope so. The angle lessens some more, over that ridge, NOOOOOOO! There is another ridge! Patience, don't lose control, here we go. Ah there is the summit beacon, we're safe!?

Forests of carnivorous fynbos, with pit traps, lie in wait as the path to Tranquillity Cracks hides in the half moon light. No torches, not a problem, area knowledge is good, make for that spot there! Yes, there! Various profanities are whisked away in the wind, both getting stronger with every step. Patience and tolerance, enthusiasm and inspiration take a dive for cover, anger, no, stop, mind over matter, we'll get there, calm head. The Grootkop-Kasteel's Poort path is intersected with great whoops of joy, and the clouds, shadowing the moon, part briefly to shine on the success. Then it's on, no rest, up and down the spine of the Apostles, slow, tired, Kasteel's has never been this long, where's the Pipe track? Patience. The car, the gateway to sleep, yes, we made it, 22H00!

Thanks Roger for many wonderful climbing experiences, all the best for your exploits in the land down under.

*Warwick Board*

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## NOSING AROUND SILVERMINE

The day dawned bright, became cloudy, but didn't rain! We arrived at Silvermine and while walking up to the crag, two female members of our party decided that they needed to blow their noses. To avoid embarrassment (the noise wasn't actually that bad) they waited till all were out of earshot, and began blowing. Alas! They didn't see us take a right turn about 50m further on and we next saw them three hours and four search parties later (they had gone on to Elephant's Eye).

The climbing was enjoyed by all - with most people succeeding to top rope the two 15's, which was led by five various people. Some top roped a 19 while Stephen Bretherick and myself led some harder lines. Some others tried top roping these with varying degrees of success.

All in all about 60 person-hours of fun was had between us.

*Jayson Orton*



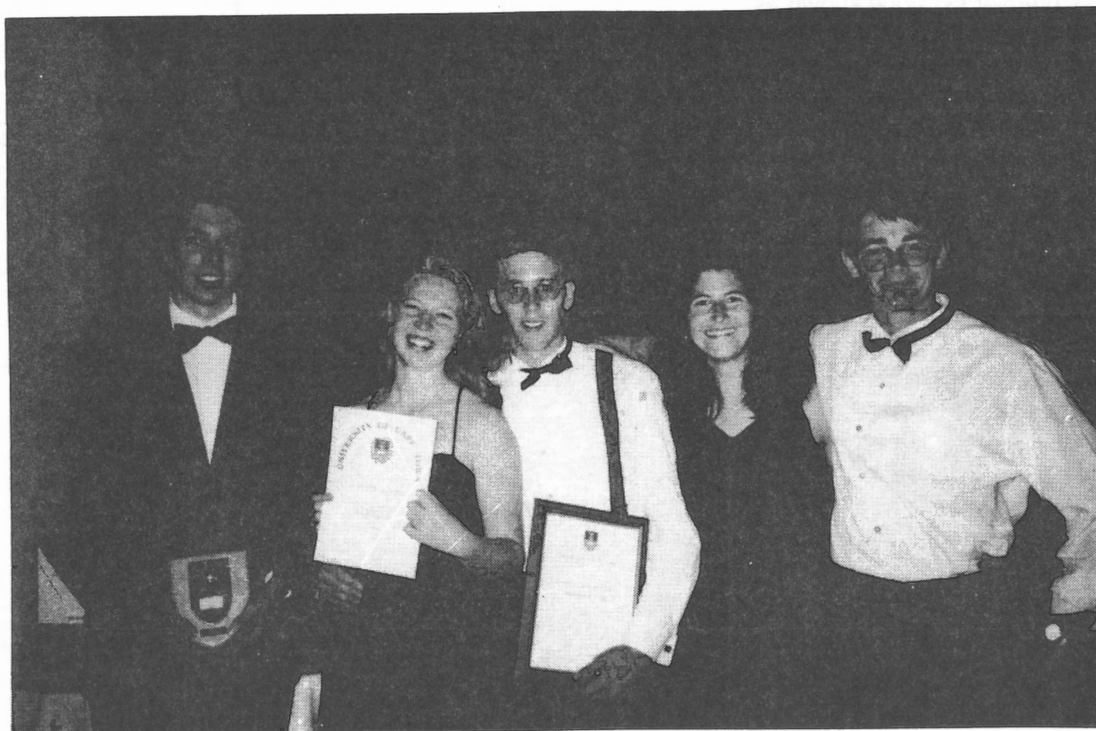
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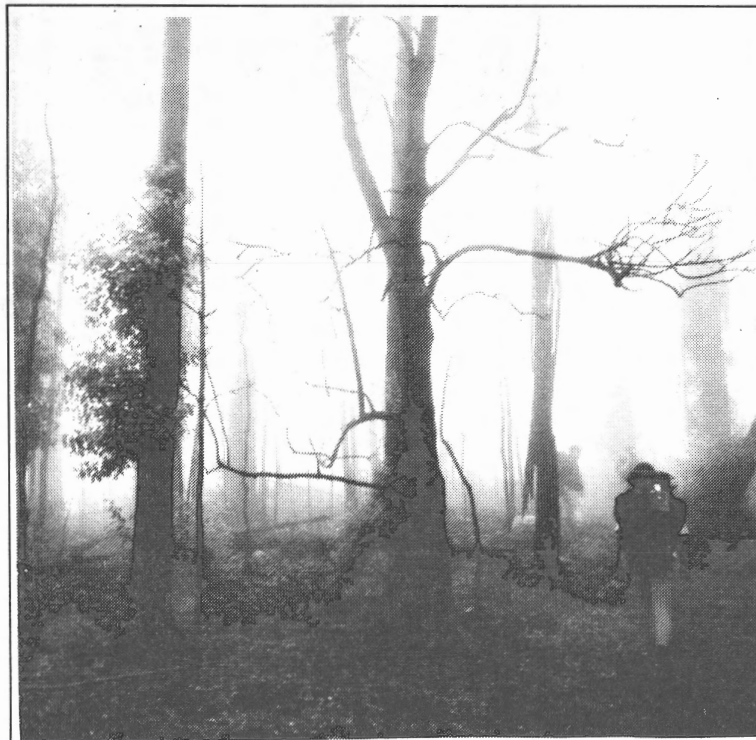
# RELAX

Do you recall that happy hike  
With bundles on our backs?  
How near to heaven it was  
To blissfully relax!  
In cosy tavern of good cheer  
To doff our heavy packs,  
And with a mug of foamy beer  
Relax.

Learn to relax : to clear the mind  
Of fear and doubt and care,  
And in vacuity to find  
The perfect peace that's there.  
With lassitude of heart and hand,  
When every sinew slacks,  
How good to rest the old bean and  
Relax, relax

Just sit back in an easy chair  
For forty winks or so,  
And fold your hands as if in prayer,  
That helps a lot, you know.  
Forget that you are you awhile,  
And pliable as wax,  
Just beautifully smile...  
Relax, relax, relax

*Robert Service*





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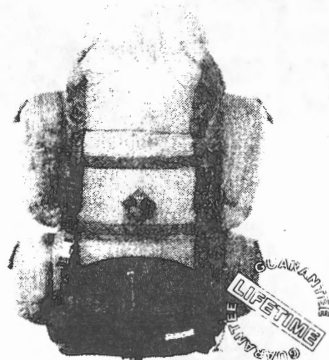
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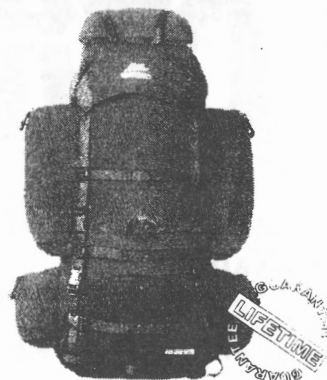
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